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Letter dated 1 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to communicate to you the position of the Government of Burundi on the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see annex).

The report contains grave distortions with respect to Burundi, since the gravity of its conclusions and recommendations is out of proportion to the single paragraph that accuses Burundi, without adducing any evidence and therefore wrongly.

The Government of Burundi categorically rejects the accusations contained in the report and requests the Security Council not to support those conclusions of the report that concern Burundi.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and the position of the Government of Burundi circulated to the members of the Security Council as documents of the Council.

(*Signed*) Marc **Nteturuye**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 1 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Position of the Government of the Republic of Burundi on the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

27 April 2001

Following the publication of the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government of the Republic of Burundi would like to draw the attention of the Security Council to the following:

I. The report provides no tangible proof of the allegations against Burundi which it contains

1. The Government of Burundi is surprised to read in the report that Burundi is one of the group of countries that have invaded and occupied the Democratic Republic of the Congo and participate in the systematic pillage of its wealth. These are allegations without any foundation. Indeed, Burundi has serious reservations about the methodology used to collect and process information, particularly as it relates to the conduct of the investigation in time and space. It is important to note, for example, that, despite the Government's pledge to cooperate fully in the investigation, the Panel of Experts did not undertake its second mission to Burundi following the publication of its first report to the Security Council.

2. Regarding the links that exist between the exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth and the continuing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi wishes to recall that it has always respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbours. During the Lusaka talks, it had an opportunity to explain the reasons for its presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which are: to ensure the security of its frontiers and continued navigation on Lake Tanganyika, an essential means of communication for a landlocked country. Burundi therefore did not go into the Democratic Republic of the Congo to occupy the country or to exploit its wealth. It was obliged to deploy a security force on the frontier in the wake of incursions by FDD and FNL troops and their allies, who established a rear base in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Since the central Government in Kinshasa had lost control of this area, Burundi found no governmental counterpart with which it could work to ensure the security of its borders, which was threatened by Burundian rebels, Interahamwe, ex-Far and Maï-Maï militia.

The Burundian security force is deployed in the Rusizi plain and on the shores of Lake Tanganyika in South Kivu and Nord-Katanga. To our knowledge, there are no mining or forestry exploitations or other forms of wealth that might have aroused temptations.

II. Of the 242 paragraphs contained in the report, the allegations against Burundi are contained only in the three sentences of paragraph 105

4. Paragraph 105 refers to an IMF office memorandum, according to which Burundi has been exporting minerals it does not produce, namely, gold, diamonds, columbo-tantalite, copper, cobalt and basic metals. We have sought without success to locate this document attributed to IMF.

5. However, according to a study of the mining sector commissioned by the World Bank and carried out in 1993, Burundi possesses a variety of minerals, including gold, nickel, tin and a number of industrial minerals. Regarding the exploitation of gold, the same study indicates that this sector currently employs between 2,000 and 3,000 artisans, who each year produce between 600 and 700 kgs (see table 1). Other reports by national mining companies give details of the periods of exploitation, the quantities produced and the export value in dollars of minerals such as cassiterite and columbo-tantalite (see table 2).

6. Burundi is also accused of mass-scale looting of bark from prunus Africana, coffee, minerals, wood, livestock and money, all of which are either transferred to the country or exported to international markets. It should be noted that there have always been transnational exchanges between Burundian population groups and those in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The capital, Bujumbura, is itself an important source of supply for the population groups of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Ores, such as gold, and diamonds are transported legally to the airport or to the port of Bujumbura on the way to foreign countries. Some of these products are sold directly on-site in Burundi, where several *comptoirs* run by nationals or foreigners have been set up. Table 4 shows the (decreasing) volume of Burundian imports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

7. Moreover, Congolese population groups fleeing the war have taken refuge in Burundi with their property, including livestock and a number of mining products, which they sell. Mention should be made, in particular, of Congolese nationals belonging to the Banyamulenge tribe and other tribes related to it.

Table 1

Mineral	*Period*	*Production in kg*	*Export value (United States dollars)*
	1992	182 645	457 353
	1993	71 977	106 134
	1994	-	-
	1995	14 654	32 649
Cassiterite	1996	5 502	17 062
	1997	20 935	56 195
	1998	-	-
	1999	18 408	48 208
	2000	9 978	21 077
	Subtotal	**324 099**	**738 678**
	1992	8 527	136 432
	1993	45 911	824 971
	1994	29 166.4	441 065
	1995	42 167	675 999
Columbo-tantalite	1996	36 855.6	579 802
	1997	45 921.2	732 856
	1998	30 480	472 344
	1999	42 149	662 088
	2000	31 175	631 134
	Subtotal	**312 352.2**	**5 156 691**
	Total	**6 364 518.2**	**5 895 369**

Source: Study of the mining sector, Report No. 12378-BU of 27 December 1993, table 2: Medium-term mining sector development scenarios (5 to 10 years).

Table 2

	Cassiterite value (US$)	*Coltan value (US$)*	*Sales (US$)*
1992	457 353	136 432	593 785
1993	106 134	824 971	931 105
1994	-	441 065	441 105
1995	32 649	675 999	708 648
1996	17 062	579 802	596 864
1997	56 195	732 856	789 051
1998	-	472 344	472 344
1999	48 208	662 088	710 296
2000	21 077	631 134	652 211
Total	**738 678**	**5 156 691**	**5 895 369**

Source: COMIBU S.A. and its mining operations, Bujumbura, 11 April 2001.

III. Despite these glaring omissions, the report proposes sanctions against Burundi

8. In its paragraph 11, the report acknowledges that data are abundant for some countries and political movements, and scarce for others. Burundi is not mentioned in either group. Therefore, why should the same conclusions and proposals for sanctions be applied to it? The Government of Burundi finds such an amalgam unacceptable and such universalizing simplistic.

9. The Panel would do better to visit Burundi once again to hold discussions with the different departments. It would also be desirable for the Panel to visit the border areas and speak with the local people.

Prior to a real enquiry of this kind, it is unfair and premature to speak of reparations, compensation of the victims, and sanctions.

IV. Conclusion

10. The Government of Burundi categorically refutes the conclusions and recommendations in the report, for they are not based on tangible evidence.

11. Nevertheless, it remains willing to cooperate with the Panel in deepening the investigations.

12. The Government of Burundi reaffirms its good will concerning dialogue with the Congolese authorities and those of the subregion with a view to finding political solutions to the conflicts in the African Great Lakes and commencing cooperation for the reconstruction and development of the subregion.

13. In this context, the Government of Burundi will shortly submit to the Security Council proposals aimed at guaranteeing security on its border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and adapting the provisions of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement to the movements of the "coalesced negative forces" headed for new rear bases in order to carry on a total war in Burundi.

Bujumbura, 27 April 2001

Table 3
Statistics on mineral production in Burundi: gold, diamonds, copper, cobalt, zinc, cassiterite, manganese, uranium, coltan, colombite

Substances	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Gold						
Quantity (kg)	3 819	2 256	0	0	0	0
Value ($)	41 508 667	24 253 819	0	0	0	0
Cassiterite						
Quantity (kg)	14 654	5 502	20 935	0	18 408	4 706
Value ($)	32 649	17 062	56 195	0	48 208	10 591
Coltan						
Quantity (kg)	46 692	46 689	45 921.2	30 480	42 149	20 425
Value ($)	659 960	632 218	732 856	472 349	662 074	340 233.5

N.B. Small-scale gold exploitation occurs almost everywhere in the country, especially in the north-western part of Burundi. Owing to the crisis and the embargo against the country, recorded production has decreased almost to zero.

Cassiterite and colombo-tantalite are exploited in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country.

Source: COMIBU.

Table 4
Imports by country of origin
(in tons)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1999 Janv-Déc.	2000 Janv-Déc.
I. EUROPE	88 951	25 647	25 040	31 957	19 960	19 960	25 636
1. Union Européenne	66 817	23 190	21 947	29 449	18 250	18 250	22 989
Belgique - Luxembourg	15 123	5 682	6 972	14 790	9 687	9 687	9 325
Rép. Féd. d'Allemagne	4 368	2 227	1 652	3 101	1 373	1 373	1 316
France	18 380	5 080	3 991	3 609	2 195	2 195	6 039
Royaume-Uni	8 880	302	259	1 084	480	480	882
Italie	5 579	2 915	1 818	2 194	2 287	2 287	2 981
Pays-Bas	17 081	6 530	6 672	4 041	1 305	1 305	1 554
Danemark	827	124	315	145	288	288	460
Irlande	6	43	42	33	17	17	52
Espagne	283	221	154	231	287	287	174
Grèce	11	7	19	33	28	28	29
Portugal	35	2	38	-	22	22	42
Autres pays de l'U.E.(1)	451	77	35	188	310	310	85
2. AUTRES	2 134	2 457	1 093	2 518	1 710	1 710	2 637
Suisse	1 157	69	98	363	85	85	145
Tchécoslovaquie	300	1 800	768	49	-	-	10
Russie	11	3	-	1	348	348	1 888
Roumanie	352	216	155	1 845	770	770	39
Yougoslavie	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
Autres pays d'Europe	312	367	72	470	509	509	774
II. ASIE	83 283	58 413	31 994	57 241	58 888	58 888	52 303
Japon	2 922	2 228	1 380	2 266	1 727	1 727	1 588
Iran	7 007	467	1 760	475	467	467	-
Rép. Pop. de Chine	7 211	2 628	1 068	3 725	2 589	2 589	4 435
Union Indienne	6 422	4 951	1 517	2 852	3 574	3 574	2 117
Corée du Sud	451	222	138	182	423	423	314
Hong-Kong	752	218	88	285	619	619	695
Corée du Nord	3	-	1	-	231	231	38
Taiwan	287	55	84	31	37	37	57
Bangladesh	591	88	304	469	486	486	123
Pakistan	984	433	74	1 388	462	462	1 067
Arabie Saoudite	49 656	42 178	20 752	39 327	40 300	40 300	32 482
Autres pays d'Asie	7 057	3 015	4 783	6 408	5 983	5 983	8 958
III. AFRIQUE	80 291	51 482	51 658	82 549	83 736	83 736	102 691
R.D.C.(2)	13 441	5 788	447	1 913	1 828	1 828	1 184
Tanzanie	20 542	9 591	5 802	11 186	20 148	20 148	48 889
Kenya	7 589	3 571	4 650	11 667	6 890	6 890	6 881
Djibouti	25	141	109	-	277	277	857
Rwanda	1 359	894	858	792	1 085	1 085	1 447
Ouganda					1 002	1 002	658
Zambie	28 794	21 470	27 149	40 988	30 647	30 647	35 989
Zimbabwe	8 880	2 466	4 054	2 321	1 858	1 858	1 587
Afrique du Sud	3 379	5 370	4 403	5 811	7 891	7 891	4 509
Autres pays d'Afrique	5 212	2 391	4 386	7 866	12 704	12 704	6 665
IV. AMERIQUE	31 249	5 427	820	1 755	1 244	1 244	1 913
Etats-Unis	30 850	4 906	668	1 078	791	791	1 411
Canada	369	433	24	169	198	198	397
Autres pays d'Amérique	30	88	98	510	255	255	105
V. OCEANIE	-	10	13	120	165	165	20
Australie	-	10	13	120	165	165	20
VI. DIVERS	431	50	2	572	275	275	5 086
TOTAL	273 115	139 029	107 527	174 204	162 276	162 276	187 589

(1) Including the data concerning imports from Austria and Sweden beginning in January 1995.
(2) République Démocratique du Congo.
Source: customs declarations.

Source: Monthly bulletin of the Bank of the Republic of Burundi.

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Letter dated 30 April 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Security Council, in the statement of its President of 21 December 2000 on the situation in Guinea (S/PRST/2000/41), welcomed my decision to dispatch an Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa. The Security Council supported its earliest possible departure, and indicated that it looked forward to the Mission's report and recommendations.

I have the honour, therefore, to submit herewith for the consideration of the Security Council the report of the Inter-Agency Mission, which visited 11 West African countries from 6 to 27 March 2001. I have also submitted the report to the President of the Economic and Social Council, as proposed by the members of the Security Council during the briefing of the Security Council on 10 April 2001 on the outcome of the Mission.

I should be grateful if you would bring the report to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Towards a comprehensive approach to durable and sustainable solutions to priority needs and challenges in West Africa

Report of the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa

I. Introduction

1. The Security Council mission to Sierra Leone, which also visited Guinea, Mali, Nigeria and Liberia between 7 and 14 October 2000, concluded, in its report (S/2000/992), that the highest priority must be given to the coordination of a comprehensive strategy with clear objectives to address the different aspects of the crisis in Sierra Leone and its underlying causes. It noted that only when all stakeholders — the Government and people of Sierra Leone, the region and the international community — act together through an agreed and interlocking approach will the latent potential for the country and the region to emerge from crisis be fulfilled. It was further observed that no lasting progress can be made in Sierra Leone without comprehensive action to tackle the current instability in the West African subregion, in particular in the Mano River Union member countries.

2. Subsequent to that report, the Secretary-General established an inter-agency Task Force on the West African Subregion, coordinated by the Department of Political Affairs, to provide recommendations concerning a coordinated and coherent United Nations response aimed at addressing the multifaceted problems confronting the subregion, taking into account initiatives under way or being proposed by various actors.

3. The Task Force comprises representatives of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, the United Nations Development Group, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

4. Following its establishment, the Task Force met weekly and has monitored the developments in the subregion, in particular the situation along the borders between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In this regard, it has brought to the attention of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security developments requiring the urgent attention of the Secretary-General and the Security Council.

5. In December 2000, the Secretary-General decided to dispatch an inter-agency mission to West Africa, to be led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahima Fall. On 21 December, in a statement by its President on the situation in Guinea (S/PRST/2000/41), the Security Council welcomed the proposed mission, supported its earliest possible departure and indicated that it looked forward to its report and recommendations.

II. Establishment and activities of the Mission

6. The Inter-Agency Mission was composed of representatives of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OHCHR, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), UNDP, the United Nations Development Group, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, and the secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Within the framework of the partnership between the United Nations and ECOWAS, the ECOWAS secretariat was kept informed about the activities of the Task Force and was involved in the preparations for the Mission. The Mission's terms of reference were the following:

- To take stock of priority needs and challenges in the West African subregion in the areas of peace and security, humanitarian affairs and economic and social development, including the inter-linkages between them.
- To consult with Governments in the subregion and with ECOWAS on ways and means of enhancing cooperation with the United Nations in

order to better address those needs and challenges.

- To make recommendations on elements of a subregional strategy to be implemented by the United Nations, in cooperation with ECOWAS, to help address the needs and challenges identified.
- To make recommendations on mobilizing the provision of international support and assistance for the elements of the proposed subregional strategy.

7. Considerable prior planning was undertaken for the work of the Mission. A committee was established which researched a range of issues relevant to its terms of reference concerning the countries to be visited and also the subregion, for the production of a briefing book for the participants. A second committee produced questions tailored for the government officials, United Nations country teams, representatives of civil society and other interlocutors in each country to be visited, which were sent for their consideration in advance of the arrival of the Mission.

8. A number of criteria were established to determine which countries in the subregion should be visited. These included countries facing particularly difficult internal problems and where conflicts were occurring or where there was a risk of conflict breaking out. Some countries were selected because of the spillover effects on them of the internal problems of other countries in the subregion. The Mission visited those countries viewed as being particularly influential in the subregion, among which were those whose heads of State hold leadership positions in regional and subregional organizations.

9. The Mission visited Senegal (7 and 8 March), Nigeria (9-11 March), Togo (11 and 12 March), Liberia (12 and 13 March), Côte d'Ivoire (13-16 March), Ghana (16 and 17 March), Sierra Leone (17 and 18 March), Guinea (19 and 20 March), Guinea-Bissau (21 March), the Gambia (21 and 22 March) and Mali (22-27 March). It was not possible, because of time constraints, for the Mission to visit all of the countries of the subregion, even though some of the countries not visited fitted the set criteria. The list of participants is annexed to this report.

10. The Mission held frank and open discussions with all its interlocutors, in line with its terms of reference. In Ghana, the Mission was received in audience by the head of State. In the other countries visited, it held extensive working sessions with the heads of State. In Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Togo, the Mission also met with the Prime Ministers and in all countries visited it met with a number of cabinet ministers. Its other interlocutors included the United Nations country teams, members of the diplomatic corps, parliamentarians, political party representatives, religious leaders, representatives of civil society groups and non-governmental organizations. It met with the Executive Secretary and staff of the ECOWAS secretariat, staff of the Mano River Union secretariat and the Chairman of the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the President of the African Development Bank and the Governor of the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO).

11. During the Mission's meetings, the idea of a comprehensive and integrated approach to the priority needs and challenges of the subregion was extensively discussed. Within that context, views were exchanged on a range of issues including in the areas of peace and security, governance, national reconciliation, promoting political dialogue, human rights, humanitarian issues, subregional integration and enhancing cooperation with ECOWAS and other subregional organizations. Additionally, the Mission discussed social and economic issues including the HIV/AIDS pandemic, alleviating poverty and the external debt, as well as debt reduction or cancellation measures. Other issues discussed were the problem of illegal arms trafficking and its connection to the sale of "conflict diamonds", the proliferation of arms and militias, landmines, and issues affecting children, including the problem of child soldiers.

12. Country-specific issues discussed included the introduction of sharia law in northern Nigeria and the economic upheaval in the Niger delta, the conflict in the Casamance region in Senegal, the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and the problems being faced in Guinea-Bissau. Other issues were the situation in Sierra Leone and its impact on the other Mano River Union member countries and the border crisis between Guinea and Liberia, including prospects for dialogue between Presidents Lansana Conté and Charles Taylor on the issue.

III. Findings of the Mission

A. Peace and security issues

1. General overview

13. Throughout the Mission's visit the gravity of the political and security situation in the West African subregion and the potential for the rapid spread of insecurity and instability, unless urgent steps are taken to address the causes of conflict and turmoil in several countries, were repeatedly underscored. Most interlocutors foresaw a deterioration of the situations in the Mano River Union countries, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and the Casamance region of Senegal, with serious attendant implications for the whole subregion, if progress was not urgently made towards addressing the political, economic and social dimensions of the problems faced. The possibility of a "domino effect", with instability spreading rapidly from one country to another within the subregion is a source of deep and widespread concern.

14. The importance of approaching conflict prevention and resolution from a regional rather than a national perspective was stressed to the Mission. Conflicts can no longer be viewed in isolation, nor can humanitarian problems within single countries in the subregion be viewed as specific and internal. It was repeatedly noted that the problems in the subregion have been compounded by a lack of political dialogue among leaders and lack of national reconciliation, persistent economic decline and high levels of poverty, the trade in arms and proliferation of militias, narcotics trafficking, disease, resource scarcity and the often violent and aggressive attempts at transnational control of natural resources by state and non-state actors. In some countries, the Mission noted wide disparities in perception of the situation between the Government and other interlocutors.

15. The conflicts in the subregion have been marked by widespread human rights abuses which have left families dispossessed, individuals traumatized and communities in a state of virtual collapse. Ethnic affinities, which transcend national boundaries, in countries such as Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, have in a number of ways helped to mitigate the humanitarian effects of conflicts in the subregion. However, they have also contributed to the rapid spread of conflicts in border areas, especially in areas where militia groups and other actors have carved out territories for control, with tragic implications for civilians.

16. The rising tensions between the Mano River Union countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) and possible escalation of the conflict between Guinea and Liberia were issues of wide concern among the Mission's interlocutors. The importance of efforts by ECOWAS leaders and the United Nations to promote reconciliation between the leaders of the three countries and the need for the development of a concerted approach by the three Governments to the conflicts in the area was stressed. Concern was expressed at the alleged involvement of state and non-state actors in providing support for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone. Several interlocutors were of the view that such support was being provided by Governments, both within and outside the subregion, and actors such as dealers in conflict diamonds, mercenaries and international arms dealers. Political and social turmoil in Côte d'Ivoire since the overthrow of the Government of President Henri Konan Bédié in December 1999, exacerbated by the disputes over national identity, and rising intolerance have resulted in the departure from the country of thousands of West African workers, with far-reaching repercussions for the country and subregion.

17. The democratic transition in Guinea-Bissau has yet to yield tangible results. With little technical expertise within government institutions, deep levels of poverty, an undeveloped private sector with few prospects for inward investment, few avenues for employment, coupled with an over-sized army which is dependent on the State for resources, the situation in Guinea-Bissau is very fragile. Without national political will to overcome internal divisions and without concerted international support, this situation may lead to the collapse of the State, with tremendous security and humanitarian implications for neighbouring countries. The potentially negative effects of continuing instability in Guinea-Bissau on Guinea, the Gambia and the Casamance area and the need for concerted assistance to be provided to the country by the international community was repeatedly stressed.

18. Regarding the Casamance, the signing of peace agreements by the Government of Senegal and representatives of MFDC (Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance) in March 2001, and the

reinvolvement of the Gambia in the peace process, are welcome developments. However, splits that have occurred within MFDC are likely to complicate efforts to implement the agreement, despite steps by the Government of Senegal to bridge those divisions. Initiatives planned by the Dakar-based Friends of the Casamance group, comprising United Nations agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations, for providing additional resources for economic and social development in the area, could provide impetus for the implementation of the agreements and consolidating peace. Concerns were expressed concerning the impact of continuing religious and ethnic strife in Nigeria and the importance of providing support to help ensure the success of the country's nascent democracy was stressed. Additionally, while armed rebellions in northern Mali and the Niger have been resolved, concerns remain regarding the possible resurgence of security threats in the Sahara strip from northern Mali and northern Niger to Chad, mainly because of the unresolved problems of reintegration and development.

19. The victims of modern-day conflicts in West Africa have been predominantly civilians. Child soldiers have been used by all sides and special attention needs to be paid to their rehabilitation. Aid workers have become targets of attacks by rebel forces. In the conflict in the Mano River Union countries all sides have used and continue to use mercenaries.

20. An issue frequently stressed to the Mission was the repercussion of ineffective demobilization and reintegration programmes following the disarmament of former combatants. Of particular concern are the large numbers of former combatants from the Liberian civil conflict, which came to an end in July 1997 following the elections. They did not receive adequate reintegration assistance, and have largely remained unemployed, posing a security problem both within Liberia and for the subregion as, lacking other opportunities, many have resorted to banditry or are involved in mercenary activities. An urgent situation exists in Guinea-Bissau, where 12,000 former combatants remain within the national army, awaiting the execution of a comprehensive and effective demobilization and reintegration programme.

21. A vicious circle has been created between armed conflict and the proliferation of arms with a mutually reinforcing effect. It is estimated that more than half of an estimated 5 million illicit weapons that circulate in West Africa are used in activities such as internal insurgencies, armed robberies, drug trafficking and illegal diamond smuggling. Small arms are readily and cheaply available in West Africa. Their use has exacerbated a spiral of violence, obstructing conflict resolution, peace-building and sustained economic and social recovery in West Africa.

22. In an effort to address the scourge of small arms in West Africa, in October 1998, ECOWAS heads of State signed a three-year renewable Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa. To assist ECOWAS in the realization of the objectives of the Moratorium, UNDP established the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development. It operates within the framework of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, at Lomé.

23. In the Mission's view, greater effort and resources are needed to investigate the dynamics of arms flows in West Africa. There is widespread concern about the volume and sophistication of arms in private hands that are being illegally imported into the subregion and the concomitant increase in the rate of violent crimes in many West African countries. The report of the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone Diamonds and Arms is a very useful first step. Similar initiatives are needed to gain a better appreciation of the dimensions of the problem throughout the subregion and to promote accountability of those involved in illicit arms trafficking.

24. There was a movement towards democratization during the 1990s throughout the subregion, which had varying degrees of success in different countries. Notable progress has been made in this area which underpins political stability. Many new political parties and groupings emerged and large numbers of people have participated in multi-party elections. However, in several countries, conflict between Governments and opposition parties remains a serious obstacle to durable peace and stability. Meanwhile, in several countries the effective functioning of parliaments and parties is limited by the inexperience of representatives and lack of capacity and resources. A significant development at the subregional level was the recent establishment by ECOWAS of a 120-member Community Parliament and a Community Court of Justice.

25. The problems associated with weak governance were identified as issues of major concern by interlocutors throughout the subregion. It was acknowledged that many Governments had formulated programmes to address a range of governance-related issues, often in cooperation with the United Nations, bilateral donors and some non-governmental organizations. Little progress has been made, however, on such issues as combating corruption, building institutional capacity, promoting inclusive political processes and popular participation, as well as decentralization and strengthening the judiciary and rule of law and respect for human rights. Considerable international assistance and support is needed to help improve governance practices.

2. ECOWAS initiatives

26. In 1999, ECOWAS adopted the Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, which provided for the creation of several organs including the Mediation and Security Council, the Council of Elders and a department in the secretariat charged with responsibility for peace and security issues. The Mediation and Security Council has met several times at the ambassadorial, ministerial and summit levels, including on the situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and the border area between Guinea and Liberia. The Mechanism also provides for the creation of an early warning centre and situation room at the secretariat in Abuja. This will be linked to observation centres with zonal headquarters in Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia and Liberia, which will monitor political, social and economic developments throughout the subregion. These centres are in the process of being set up. Interlocutors noted that international assistance would be required to improve the early warning capacity of the secretariat and that cooperation between the United Nations and the Mechanism should be enhanced considerably to help ensure that it becomes fully operational.

27. Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal and Togo are bound by the Accord de non-aggression et d'assistance en matière de défense (ANAD) which was signed in 1977. It has had some success in promoting peaceful relations among its signatories. A process is now under way to implement the decision made in 1999 by the ECOWAS heads of State for ANAD to be harmonized with and absorbed into ECOWAS.

28. An important and innovative element of ECOWAS initiatives within the past decade to enhance peace and security in the subregion has been its deployment of peacekeeping forces to several of its member States where conflict had broken out. Between 1990 and 1997, the Monitoring Group of ECOWAS (ECOMOG) undertook a peace maintenance operation in Liberia and it has been generally credited with playing a vital role in the peace process that brought the eight-year civil conflict to an end. ECOMOG was also deployed in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. The possible deployment of an interposition force along the borders between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to help prevent the armed incursions occurring in the area remains under active consideration by ECOWAS.

29. However, in carrying out peacekeeping operations, ECOWAS is severely hampered by lack of financial resources and secretariat capacity to plan, monitor, direct and sustain a force in the field. Other problems include the lack of funds to organize, maintain and effectively run peacekeeping training institutions that it has established. ECOWAS countries, therefore, urgently need international assistance for the provision of technical assistance and operational equipment for fielding troops both for ECOMOG and for United Nations peacekeeping missions. Government officials also need to be fully informed about United Nations policies and procedures regarding peacekeeping operations, particularly those regarding reimbursement for troops and wet and dry lease arrangements for equipment.

30. It was stressed to the Mission that the political will exists among ECOWAS member States to help contribute towards peacekeeping both through ECOMOG or within United Nations peacekeeping operations. They felt that, particularly for operations within the region, West African troops were at an advantage, being familiar with the culture, terrain, climate and a number of other factors. However, lack of equipment, training, logistical and technical capacities were major inhibiting factors. It was felt that the United Nations could do much more to help countries in the subregion which were willing to contribute troops to fulfil such shortfalls in requirements. Several interlocutors stressed the considerable economic strain that was placed on West African troop-contributing countries and argued that

those Governments should not have to use their own, already meagre resources, for equipping troops for peacekeeping operations.

31. With regard to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) several interlocutors indicated that, in view of the exigencies of the situation, the force's mandate should be changed to peace enforcement. While the need for UNAMSIL to deploy in strength into RUF-occupied areas in Sierra Leone was generally acknowledged, the perceived slowness in the further deployment of the force throughout the country was widely criticized.

3. Civil society initiatives

32. It was reaffirmed to the Mission that representatives of civil society, often frustrated by their perceived lack of power, are increasingly looking to the United Nations, the international community, and regional and subregional organizations for assistance and partnerships to strengthen their ability to undertake conflict prevention and resolution measures in their own countries or areas. In some cases they have adopted effective, multi-dimensional, coordinated and regional collaborative approaches which build on the use of local, national and regional resources including traditional leaders and social networks. This is aptly demonstrated by the Mano River Union Women's Peace Network, which links women from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, working at various levels, to promote peace in the area. Network representatives have recently met with the heads of State of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia to urge them to work together to resolve the conflict in the Mano River Union area. At the community level, a variety of initiatives are under way, often using traditional cultural links, aimed at cultivating a culture of peace.

33. Cooperation between intergovernmental organizations within the subregion with civil society organizations in the areas of conflict prevention and management remains limited and could be strengthened considerably. However, many of these organizations remain in great need of international assistance to increase their effectiveness which is often limited by factors such as lack of resources and institutional capacity. In this regard, the Economic Commission for Africa, as part of the Mano River Basin initiative which it is leading, is developing a project which would provide support to civil society initiatives aimed at promoting peace and security within the Mano River Union member countries.

B. Human rights issues

34. The Mission found that reports of violations of human rights were widespread within the subregion. Such violations ranged from the broader rights of peoples to peace, security and development to abuses against the rights of individuals. Human rights defenders and members of opposition parties in several countries have often been victims of arbitrary arrest, unfair trials, torture and extrajudicial executions, or are often forced to exile. While there are a number of political parties, exercise of the right to demonstrate is often met by disproportionate use of force by security forces. The problems of mercenary activities, especially in conflicts in the Mano River Union countries, need to be addressed. Non-state entities, including the business sector, must be held accountable for illicit activities related to areas of conflict, including arms trafficking and mineral resources smuggling.

35. The importance of ensuring human rights protection at all times, including during periods of political transition and conflict situations, was recognized. In this regard, the situation at the border between Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, including the lack of access to the population and large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, is a matter of grave concern.

36. The need to ensure that there is no impunity for human rights violations was raised by several interlocutors. Particular reference was made to the need for truth and justice in Sierra Leone, as part of a national reconciliation process, in view of the atrocities against civilians that had, and continue to be, perpetrated there, particularly by RUF, during the decade-long conflict. In this regard, the decision to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the prospect of the establishment of the Special Court are welcome. However, the confusion about who might be prosecuted by the Court and the delays that might be caused by the decision to fund it through voluntary contributions were voiced as issues of concern.

37. With regard to some country-specific situations, the international commission of inquiry for Côte d'Ivoire, which the Secretary-General was requested by

the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to establish, to investigate human rights violations, including mass extrajudicial executions, during the presidential elections in October 2000 started its work in February 2000. The absence of institutional measures to address the issue of truth and justice in Liberia is still considered by many to be a major handicap in the country's transition to democracy and the rule of law.

38. Ethnicity, religion and citizenship have been issues behind recent conflicts in several countries. This has been the case in Nigeria, following the proclamation of sharia law in several northern states. Also, serious incidents of communal violence have occurred in Lagos and elsewhere. In Côte d'Ivoire, the concept of *ivoirite* has been perceived by many, especially Muslims and people from northern parts of the country, as an attempt to deny their right to citizenship and participation in public life, raising the spectre of ethnic and internal tensions. Violence against foreigners has provoked the return of many West Africans to their countries of origin, with consequences for security and stability within the subregion.

39. The difficult situation in several West African countries means that numerous groups of people are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations, including internally displaced persons, ethnic or religious minorities, refugees, women and children. Thus far the rights of victims of human rights violations during armed conflicts or political transitions have not been adequately addressed. Child soldiers are still being actively recruited for armed conflict. For children in certain areas, there is only limited protection against trafficking and sexual abuse and the number of homeless children is increasing. Despite growing awareness, violence against women, especially in armed conflicts, continues unabated as many are subjected to sexual slavery, torture and domestic violence and forced into prostitution. In the field of economic and social rights, particular attention was drawn to the lack of access to adequate education, employment and health care in the subregion. This is a particular problem for young people, who, lacking education and employment opportunities, may be drawn towards making a living through illicit activities.

40. The six major United Nations human rights treaties as well as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights have been ratified by most of the countries in the subregion. In practice, the implementation of these standards has been lacking, however. Many Governments have difficulty in meeting the reporting obligations to international supervisory committees on the measures taken to give effect to the provisions of human rights treaties to which they are parties. In addition, human rights education remains weak and does not take fully into account positive traditional values.

C. Economic development and regional cooperation

41. The economies of the countries of West Africa are generally very fragile and in some cases are continuing to deteriorate. This is the situation despite the abundant natural resource endowments which could be harnessed to spur economic growth. Within the subregion, the States members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo) have outperformed the other ECOWAS countries, with an average growth rate of some 5 per cent over the past 10 years. The repercussions of the decline in economic performance in the past year in Côte d'Ivoire, which normally constitutes 40 per cent of the combined economic activity of UEMOA countries, continues to be felt in countries throughout the subregion. Contributory factors include the departure from Côte d'Ivoire of thousands of workers from other West African countries and the reduced free circulation of goods and people.

42. The reduction in the price of many export commodities from West African countries in recent years and their high debt service obligations were also noted as factors contributing to the economic decline. Decreased import revenues have reduced the resources available for development projects. For example, interlocutors in Guinea-Bissau expressed concern about the 40 per cent drop in the world market price of cashew nuts, the main export commodity. In Togo similar concerns were expressed regarding the price of phosphates.

43. The issue of the external debt burden was raised as a major concern by both government and non-governmental interlocutors. It was noted, for example, that the total eternal debt of Nigeria, at some $40 billion, is almost identical to its gross domestic product (GDP). In Guinea-Bissau, the external debt stands at more than 100 per cent of GDP. The ECOWAS member

countries devote an average of between 20 and 60 per cent of export revenues to external debt servicing. In that context, interlocutors in most of the countries visited viewed the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) programme as a useful initiative. Several felt that the programme should reduce debt servicing obligations substantially, so as to release resources for economic and social development. In Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Nigeria it was particularly stressed that, without considerable assistance from the international community, including savings from the HIPC programme, progress towards democratization would be undermined and democratic systems in place would be threatened or at risk.

44. The subregional economic growth rate has lagged behind the rate of population growth in past years, with little to indicate that the situation will improve in the near future, so that already high poverty levels are likely to worsen. This is the case across the subregion, from Côte d'Ivoire, where 18 per cent of the population is living below the poverty line, to Guinea-Bissau, where more than 80 per cent of the population lives in poverty. The other indicators of social and economic development, such as access to basic social services including education, health services and potable water, have also been severely constrained by the lack of economic growth. The situation is even worse in countries which have recently emerged from wars or in which conflict continues. They are among the countries in the world with the least capacity to provide their citizens with access to basic services. For example, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone are among the 10 countries at the bottom of the UNDP Human Development Index, a composite measure of life expectancy and access to basic health and educational services. Optimism was expressed by several interlocutors, both within and outside Government, that the economic situation would improve in the near future. However, both state and non-state actors must exhibit considerable political will and commitment to implement reforms and initiatives if the declining trends are to be arrested.

45. The serious problems associated with high rates of unemployment in West African countries, in particular youth unemployment, was generally stressed to the Mission. This is viewed as a major factor contributing to instability. It was noted that the informal sector, which continues to flourish, is the main source of current employment and is the area which holds the strongest potential for future job creation.

46. The causes of persistent economic stagnation and the attendant increase in poverty and unemployment levels are numerous and interrelated. The Mission noted three factors of particular importance, the first being the issue of governance and internal national political dynamics. Prospects for economic growth are generally higher in countries with more open and participatory democratic systems, in large measure because of the establishment of environments conducive to business. For example, despite some current difficulties in the economic and social areas, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal exemplify this commitment to democratization and its corresponding economic benefits. Conversely, inconclusive and protracted political transitions, such as those taking place in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau, in several ways negatively affect prospects for stability and economic growth. In Liberia and Togo, lack of political dialogue between the Government and opposition parties, problems of bad governance and human rights problems which have led to the suspension of economic assistance by some donors have further worsened prospects for economic growth in the near term.

47. A second factor is the weak institutional capacity of most of the countries in the subregion. Most lack qualified human resources and policy tools to respond appropriately and in a timely manner to changing domestic and international circumstances. Donors have made important contributions to efforts to address some of these capacity issues. A number of government and civil society interlocutors pointed out the failure of structural adjustment programmes in reducing poverty and spurring economic growth. Consequently, alternative and complementary programmes were being explored, such as the poverty reduction strategies sponsored by the World Bank and other partner-supported programmes in governance and capacity-building.

48. The civil conflicts in several West African countries constitute the third major factor constraining economic growth and development. Years of civil war in Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone have resulted in widespread destruction of social, economic and physical infrastructure, the departure of many skilled personnel, problems concerning control over natural resources etc., so that capacity for economic recovery has been drastically reduced. The importance

of adequate international resources to assist such countries to recover was mentioned by many interlocutors. Without adequate intervention, the spiral of instability in those countries, resulting from fragile political institutions and weak economic growth, was seen as likely to continue, with contagious effects throughout the subregion.

49. The ECOWAS countries have shown resilience in the face of the difficulties outlined, giving cause for some optimism. Individually, through country-based mechanisms, and collectively through subregional mechanisms, particularly under the auspices of ECOWAS and UEMOA, efforts are being made to redress the situation. Regarding the country mechanisms, a commitment by the Governments of the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal to implementing economic stabilization and reform programmes necessary to facilitate economic growth is manifest. Several interlocutors underscored the importance of strengthening democracy, transparency by government, political dialogue, and good governance if further economic decline is to be halted.

50. A number of interlocutors expressed concern that demands being made by international financial institutions on the Government of Guinea-Bissau to undertake fiscal reforms, combined with other factors, could contribute to destabilizing the country unless special efforts were made to simultaneously provide support to address the mounting internal debt accumulation and a comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Similar concerns were expressed concerning demands being made on the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. Several interlocutors felt that, while political dialogue and respect for human rights in Côte d'Ivoire should be encouraged, protracted delays in resuming economic assistance might result in the unravelling of the country's economy, with grave implications for the subregion. A holistic approach was called for which simultaneously addressed the issue of political dialogue, inclusion, security and stability as well as economic support.

51. ECOWAS and UEMOA provide a framework of mechanisms relating to the economic and social spheres. These mechanisms aim to reinforce subregional cooperation and integration and cover issues including a common currency, freedom of movement, trade, transport, agriculture and energy and also security and defence, and the eventual emergence of ECOWAS as the pre-eminent subregional organization. Several interlocutors saw the implementation of ECOWAS integration plans as one of the surest ways to improve economic growth in the subregion, improving the ability of West African countries to effectively compete in the world market and benefit from globalization.

52. In articulating the ideas of regional integration and the mechanisms for its advancement, it was widely felt that UEMOA, the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and other subregional entities should become specialized centres within the umbrella of ECOWAS. They were seen as becoming complementary poles of expertise to provide specific services to ECOWAS. This arrangement could further accelerate the integration of the countries in the subregion and existing institutions within the ECOWAS secretariat.

53. It was affirmed to the Mission that ECOWAS had made considerable progress towards the abolition of visas and the establishment of borderless zones. The two-track approach to currency convergence, which is scheduled to permit the adoption by Ghana and Nigeria of a common currency by the end of next year, and to make it possible for the whole subregion to do the same by the end of 2004, has made considerable progress. Institutions have been set up in the subregion to address aspects of these critical issues on which discussions are continuing between ECOWAS, UEMOA and other partners. ECOWAS has also launched sector initiatives covering transnational roads, the establishment of a power pool and a gas pipeline linking Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana, as well as a common agricultural policy.

54. The weaknesses of the existing subregional mechanisms, particularly regarding capacity and financial and human resources, were acknowledged. The need for cooperation among donors, both bilateral and multilateral, across sectors and subregionally, to provide adequate support to the ECOWAS secretariat and its integration mechanisms was stressed. Currently, donor response to the subregion, including that of the United Nations system and the World Bank, was seen as mainly country focused, delivered through a range of bilateral and multilateral support programmes, with very limited regional interventions.

55. The European Union's regional programmes were welcomed and collaboration among donors in such

efforts across sectors and in collaboration with ECOWAS was urged. In this regard, the new initiatives by the World Bank, the African Development Bank and USAID to implement regional strategies in the subregion were well received and encouraged. It was conveyed to the Mission that support for regional cooperation and integration and the strengthening of ECOWAS institutional capacity is critical to assist the subregion to better deal with the challenges of globalization in a rapidly changing world. A movement from the current country-focused approach, even in the implementation of subregional and bilateral programmes, to a subregional approach was generally urged, given the need for ECOWAS to be the main engine of growth and stability in West Africa.

D. Humanitarian issues

1. Refugees, internally displaced persons and population movements

56. Just over a decade ago, West Africa was a markedly different place. There were about 20,000 refugees and a negligible number of internally displaced persons. Today the situation is very different. There are well over half a million refugees and over 670,000 internally displaced persons, all victims of conflict in the subregion. The political and social landscape, in particular that of the three Mano River Union countries, is characterized by instability. Out of a population of approximately 15 million people in those countries, over 1.1 million are either internally displaced persons or refugees. Sadly, all signs suggest that, without concerted efforts to resolve what are deepening rifts in the area, further deterioration is more than likely to happen. Guinea, which is generously hosting around 420,000 refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone, some for over a decade, has recently become embroiled in conflict with Liberia, a situation that has resulted in the displacement of 150,000 of its own citizens.

57. The refugee caseload in Guinea constitutes approximately 10 per cent of that country's population. Sierra Leone hosts 6,000 Liberian refugees and 500,000 internally displaced persons, while Liberia hosts 70,000 refugees from Sierra Leone and 20,000 internally displaced persons. The 17-year-old conflict in the Casamance area of Senegal continues to threaten the stability of both Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, and has itself produced over 41,000 internally displaced persons. Landmines in both Casamance and Guinea-Bissau will prove a long-term hazard for civilians. Senegal, while attempting to cope with the needs of its own conflict-affected citizens, is making contingency plans for possible refugee flows from Guinea, if the conflict continues to spread. Additionally, Guinea-Bissau is beginning to see an inflow of Sierra Leonean refugees from Guinea. While the Mission was aware that the potential for a massive complex emergency, not unlike that which is consuming the Great Lakes region, has heightened significantly over the last six months, the urgency of this situation was widely and repeatedly stressed by the Mission's interlocutors.

58. Until recently, refugees in the subregion have been relatively sure that they could depend upon some degree of protection from their hosts, with many of whom they share ethnic affinities. As the political tension has heightened between specific leaders, the subregion is experiencing not only donor fatigue but also host fatigue, which is emerging as tensions have mounted within host communities that have often shared their resources with refugees over the past decade. Host communities are also aware of the dangers of armed elements within their midst who have infiltrated the refugee communities and put both host and refugee communities at risk.

59. Insecurity has, in a number of areas, severely constrained humanitarian operations. In the "parrot's beak" area of Guinea, lack of humanitarian access has dramatically affected over 180,000 Sierra Leonean refugees, 10,000 internally displaced persons and 60,000 civilians who are trapped and stranded with few prospects for resettlement. Delivery of food and basic supplies is proving exceedingly difficult. Targeting of refugees by armed elements has led to many moving from that area to Sierra Leone and further north into Guinea. Protection of refugees and internally displaced persons poses a major challenge for the humanitarian community. Allegations of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law by armed actors, the targeting of civilians, widespread looting of food and belongings, the use of child soldiers, forced conscription, the use of civilians as human shields, all characterize the situation. A climate of impunity prevails as the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons are often violated. Armed groups have also targeted humanitarian workers, through hostage-taking and the recent killing of humanitarian personnel.

60. In recognition of these threats, UNHCR has recently called for "safe corridors" to enable refugees and internally displaced persons to flee the combat areas to safety further north. Improving the physical protection of refugees started by agreeing with the Guinean authorities upon the necessity of ensuring "safe access" and the "safe passage" of refugees entangled in the war-torn areas of Guinea in order to relocate them in safer areas of the country and provide food and other basic assistance.

61. Internally displaced persons are also badly in need of assistance. This was starkly apparent when the Mission visited Pamelap in Guinea, once a rich and dynamic town on the border with Sierra Leone, where attacks by armed elements from Sierra Leone in recent months have resulted in most of the residents fleeing and the destruction of a great deal of property.

62. The Mission noted that most assistance to Liberian refugees had been discontinued in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea despite the fact that many refugees have been compelled to remain in their host countries because of insecurity and the absence of a conducive environment for their return. As these refugees receive very limited assistance, they are competing with the host communities for scant resources and have thus placed an enormous burden on host Governments. Government officials in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana illustrated for the Mission how this has aggravated an already fragile situation and has led, in many instances, to security problems.

63. This lack of support for protracted refugee caseloads poses what is a perceptible crisis of conscience for humanitarian workers and creates a sense of inequity in the camps that could contribute to future problems. Of concern, in this regard, is the possible recruitment of young refugees by rebel groups, increased criminality among refugees, and participation of some refugees in weapons trafficking or other illegal smuggling, which could prove very difficult and expensive to address in the long term.

2. HIV/AIDS pandemic

64. The HIV/AIDS pandemic poses a serious threat to the development of Africa south of the Sahara. Nearly 25 million Africans are living with HIV/AIDS while another 14 million have already died from AIDS. The consequences of HIV/AIDS in the social and economic spheres have been devastating, as much of the progress made in those areas in recent decades has been severely undermined, or shattered. The movements of people across borders as a result of massive displacements contributes to the spread of the disease, and easily renders preventive measures ineffective, particularly as over 80 per cent of those infected are unaware that they are carriers.

65. In West Africa, prevalence rates have been increasing in some of the larger countries. Côte d'Ivoire is already among the 15 worst-affected countries in the world and the epicentre of the epidemic in the subregion, with an adult prevalence rate of close to 11 per cent. In Nigeria, over 5 per cent of all adults have HIV, and in Ghana the infection rate among the adult population is 3.6 per cent. The impact of conflict in countries like Sierra Leone poses a particular threat, in terms of a further spread of the epidemic. In Sierra Leone, the adult prevalence is currently close to 3 per cent. The prevalence rate in other West African countries remains below 3 per cent. In Senegal, government commitment to combating AIDS, including through public awareness campaigns which involve a wide range of national partners, has helped to slow the spread of the disease.

3. Problems in the delivery of social services and humanitarian assistance

66. In many countries an already overburdened capacity to deliver social services is further stretched by the persistent deterioration of living conditions in rural areas, and an increase in urban poverty which creates new problems in a resource-constrained environment. Because of the economic crisis and decreased job opportunities, self-employment, which has been the most promising social adjustment response along with the coping strategies of the traditional culture, appears to have reached its limits. The safety net constituted by family and neighbourhood patterns of solidarity no longer prevails. As a result, vulnerable social groups, including female-headed households, children and the elderly, have been forced to make a living in often hostile environments plagued by crime, political unrest, social violence and declining social services.

67. The consequences have been devastating and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future, if political will and initiative do not walk hand in hand with humanitarian assistance and targeted economic and social development programmes that can turn the tide

of violence in countries in crisis in the subregion. In this regard, the Mission noted with concern the following issues:

- Weak coordination between humanitarian agencies, government authorities and peacekeeping operations.
- Lack of adequate resources and appropriate programmes that could be rapidly put in place to stabilize post-conflict situations by efficiently bridging the gap between the end of emergency relief and the beginning of development assistance.
- Lack of a proper strategy by United Nations humanitarian agencies to develop the institutional capacity of local non-governmental organizations, particularly in the management of emergency situations.
- The poor interaction between international and national non-governmental organizations in complex emergency operations such as in Guinea.

68. In meetings with representatives of Governments and civil society as well as with refugees, the Mission's attention was repeatedly drawn to the stark disparities between the relatively meagre assistance provided for humanitarian emergencies in Africa and the largesse generated for such emergencies in Europe. A sense of cynicism prevailed about the goodwill of the international community towards helping solve the critical structural problems and ensuring that the gap between emergency relief and development is closed.

IV. Assessment and recommendations

69. One of the principal messages conveyed to the Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa, by heads of State and a range of other governmental and non-governmental interlocutors, was that greater subregional integration in the political, security, economic and social spheres, with ECOWAS as the main engine for the process, is a prime factor in addressing the priority needs and challenges of the subregion. There was a concerted call for international partners to provide substantial assistance to ECOWAS activities and initiatives in those spheres. Furthermore, it was recommended that such assistance should be a central focus in their policy, strategy, institutional arrangements and programmes in West Africa, through a holistic and well-coordinated approach. Several interlocutors expressed the view that the United Nations, as an impartial and objective actor, was the most appropriate organization to effectively mobilize the international community to work with the countries of the subregion in promoting integration.

70. The linkages that exist between peoples and communities in West African countries and the porous nature of borders have resulted in a long tradition of free movement and settlement of people across national frontiers. This is particularly prevalent in areas where people of the same ethnic groups are artificially divided by borders. ECOWAS agreements that allow for the free movement of West African citizens within the subregion without visa requirements have reinforced this trend.

71. In the past two decades, in particular, factors such as conflicts and political instability have precipitated large movements of people from one country to another and also caused significant numbers to become internally displaced. As a result, enormous pressures have come to bear on communities' facilities, infrastructure and the environment in a number of countries, straining their resources as they struggle to cope with the situation.

72. These phenomena have created new, and often conflicting, political security and human development dynamics and precipitated serious security problems and humanitarian crises in several countries. These problems, together with those of economic development and integration, transcend national boundaries, affecting the entire subregion, with the result that national programmes and sectoral approaches have proved inadequate in mitigating them and bringing about durable solutions. An integrated subregional approach by the international community has therefore become urgently needed to help prevent the further emergence of conflicts, restore peace and stability and promote economic and social development. This was reinforced by many of the Mission's interlocutors who stressed the importance of the United Nations and international partners developing such a subregional approach to addressing the priority needs and challenges facing West Africa.

A. A United Nations response

73. Integrated, multifaceted approaches are emphasized in the programmes of various United Nations agencies and their relevance has been

reinforced in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) and the Millennium Declaration and by various global conferences organized by the United Nations.

74. Several agencies, operational funds and programmes within the United Nations system already use integrated programming approaches in implementing national and subregional programmes. This approach has been facilitated by the decentralized presence in West Africa of a number of United Nations agencies, departments and programmes. For example, the regional offices of key humanitarian actors such as UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF were able to rapidly identify the needs and obstacles and respond quickly, and in a concerted manner, to the crisis in the Guinea border area when it began in September 2000.

75. In another example of an integrated subregional initiative, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in response to the grave dimensions of the humanitarian crisis in the subregion, launched in 2001 its first subregional United Nations Inter-Agency Appeal for West Africa, which addresses needs in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Humanitarian intervention is in the sectors of nutrition, health, protection, water and sanitation, and education. The Appeal does not only target refugees and internally displaced persons, but has also taken an innovative position with regard to assistance to host communities and contingency planning for future crises. Flexibility has also been built into the Appeal to ensure that regional managers can redirect resources from one country to the other or from one activity to another, according to need. The principle of the Appeal is that resources should follow and meet the needs of beneficiaries wherever they are.

76. The development and implementation by the United Nations system of a fully integrated, comprehensive and broad-based subregional approach to addressing the multifaceted problems and challenges being faced in West Africa, as proposed by the Mission, has a number of implications, particularly regarding strategy and policy setting, institutional arrangements and programme activities, for both the United Nations and its partners.

B. Strategy and policy setting

77. It is the Mission's view that the different strategy and policy-setting mechanisms of the United Nations system, in particular those of the agencies operating within the subregion, should be streamlined to enhance capacity for developing and implementing national and subregional strategies and policies. These approaches, policies and strategies should be developed and implemented in partnership with ECOWAS.

Recommendations

- **A mechanism for systematic and regular consultations among entities of the United Nations system for defining and harmonizing national and subregional policies and strategies should be established. Both national and subregional concerns should be reflected in programming strategies to facilitate holistic programme development.**
- **In addition to Governments, United Nations agencies, departments and programmes in the subregion should consult more fully with ECOWAS and other subregional organizations, international and national partners and civil society in developing cohesive strategies.**

C. Institutional arrangements and mechanisms

78. Effective implementation of a subregional strategy requires the enhancement of working arrangements within the United Nations system at the subregional level. In this regard, a system of collaborative mechanisms and periodic consultations should be formalized.

79. It was evident to the Mission that the United Nations urgently needs to enhance its capacity to continuously monitor and to influence the political, security, economic and social situations in West Africa. In this context, the United Nations should further develop frameworks and institutional arrangements that would allow it to intensify its collaboration with ECOWAS and other major actors in the subregion with regard to conflict resolution and management and in addressing other major issues.

Recommendations

1. United Nations office for West Africa

- **To enhance United Nations capacity and collaboration in the subregion, and to complement existing activities, a United Nations office for West Africa should be established. The office, to be headed by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General, would have the following main functions:**
  - **Assisting Headquarters and subregional offices of the United Nations system in setting integrated policies and strategies for activities in West Africa;**
  - **Monitoring and reporting on political, security, human rights, humanitarian and development issues in the subregion;**
  - **Ensuring harmonization of United Nations system activities in the political, security, human rights, humanitarian and development areas with those of ECOWAS and other subregional and relevant organizations, focused on addressing priority needs and challenges in the subregion, as identified by the United Nations, ECOWAS and other relevant organizations;**
  - **Monitoring and supporting the relevant decisions and activities of ECOWAS and other subregional organizations;**
  - **Lending support to national and subregional peace-building efforts and promoting the integration of a conflict prevention dimension in national and subregional activities.**

2. Integrated mission task force

- **The Secretary-General's Inter-Agency Task Force on the West African Subregion at Headquarters should be transformed into an integrated mission task force on West Africa. The integrated mission task force, which will be discontinued once the West Africa office has become operational, would focus on implementation of key recommendations in this and other related reports and work closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and backstop the activities of his or her office at the beginning of its operations.**

D. Programming approach

80. A more fully integrated and broad-based subregional approach by the United Nations system should emphasize programming strategies undertaken in partnership with subregional organizations, Governments, international partners, non-governmental organizations and civil society groups. Common frameworks should be developed bringing together the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, in a unified approach at both the national and subregional levels. The protocols of collaboration and memoranda of understanding already existing between some agencies represent a positive step in that direction. The various country level United Nations development assistance frameworks, common country assessments and poverty reduction strategy papers should be harmonized and should form the basis for developing a subregional approach. Harmonization and coordination need to be a prime focus in collaboration between all agencies.

81. United Nations country teams, Governments and development partners should strive to work together through collaborative processes such as the development assistance frameworks, at the national and subregional level, so as to facilitate the development of complementary and comprehensive programmes. United Nations country teams should involve all partners in the preparation of common country assessments and in the preparation of the national frameworks. Subregional offices, working with partners, should prepare common subregional strategies and frameworks, preferably based on existing instruments such as the consolidated appeal, common country assessments and development assistance frameworks.

Recommendations

- **Consideration should be given to the development of a subregional United Nations development assistance framework that would particularly target issues of a cross-border nature. This umbrella subregional development assistance framework should complement national common country assessments and development assistance frameworks.**
- **Steps should be taken to ensure complementarity in national development assistance frameworks, common country assessments and poverty**

reduction strategy papers when dealing with common cross-border issues and priority areas so that they form the basis for developing a subregional development assistance framework.

- **The subregional development assistance framework should include a plan for strategic peace-building and recovery activities, which should serve for the mobilization of resources.**
- **The United Nations office for West Africa should coordinate the development of a subregional development assistance framework.**
- **Steps should be taken to ensure that country teams, operating in countries where unstable political and security conditions persist, are strong and appropriately staffed. The Resident Coordinator unit should be reinforced to ensure strong leadership and coordination.**

E. Specific issues

82. The Mission's further recommendations for action relate to specific issues within the following general areas: peace and security; governance and human rights; humanitarian assistance; and economic development and regional integration.

1. Peace and security

(a) Conflicts in the Mano River Union area

83. The situation in Sierra Leone and its effects on Liberia and Guinea, including the border areas between the three countries, is a core issue in the general framework of peace and security in West Africa. Most interlocutors stressed that achieving a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Mano River Union countries is crucial in any approach aimed at addressing priority needs and challenges in the subregion.

84. The difficulties and uncertainties of the situation in Sierra Leone were apparent from the discussions that the Mission held there. The six-month extension of the mandate of the Government of Sierra Leone provided by Parliament will terminate in September 2001. Meanwhile, the prospects for successfully holding elections in December 2001, as proposed by President Kabbah, and the legitimacy of the elected candidate remains uncertain while RUF still occupies a significant part of the country's territory and around half the population are refugees or internally displaced. Furthermore, the preparations for the elections will need to be urgently expedited if the proposed date is to be met. It is the Mission's view that presidential and legislative elections should be planned and organized to ensure inclusive participation by all the political groupings, including RUF. However, it is unclear how much power the new political and military leadership of RUF is able to exert over the whole group, at a time when key decisions need to be made.

85. The deployment of UNAMSIL is still constrained by the availability of troops. Also, issues regarding its mandate as a peacekeeping or peace-enforcement operation continue to be the subject of discussion in the subregion. Meanwhile, it appears that the Government is increasingly looking towards abandoning the two-track approach and favouring a purely military option. Such a solution would be difficult to achieve, given the insufficient training and lack of combat experience of the Sierra Leone army, the unpredictability of RUF strength and the nature of guerrilla warfare in a highly forested country. Another question that remains to be answered is the future of the Lomé Peace Agreement: whether it will be resuscitated as a whole or partially. It is not clear whether the political aspects of the Agreement, such as power sharing and the transformation of RUF into a political party, can be reconciled with the fact that RUF has not respected the provisions of the Agreement and that many of its leaders are suspected of committing gross violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law. In addition, there is a need for truth, justice and accountability, if a process of national reconciliation is to succeed. Moreover, the possible further six-month extension of the mandate of the Government or, alternatively, the establishment of a transitional government until elections can be held are issues to be given due consideration.

86. The uncertainty in Sierra Leone is echoed by uncertainty in relations between Liberia and Guinea and the risk of the further spread of conflict within the Mano River Union countries. The alliance between the Guinean army and ULIMO-K has proved to be unpredictable and the indiscriminate bombing of border areas of northern Sierra Leone by Guinean forces has implications in terms of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sierra Leone and the effects of the bombing on the civilian population in that country. There is also

uncertainty about the fate of the large population of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees, owing to difficulties in ensuring their safe return and in finding safe areas for their resettlement in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The reported recent flare-up of fighting in Lofa County on the northern border of Liberia with Guinea is an added source of concern.

87. In view of the nature of the conflict along the borders of the Mano River Union countries, the expansion of the mandate of UNAMSIL to cover Guinea and Liberia might need to be considered, particularly given the urgent need to place an interposition force along the border areas between the Mano River Union countries and ECOWAS plans to deploy such a force, and given the request by President Taylor for the deployment of a force to monitor the borders of Liberia and to verify compliance with the recent sanctions being proposed by the Security Council. This issue needs to be carefully considered by the appropriate departments of the United Nations Secretariat.

Recommendations

- **The United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone should maintain the two-track approach to the resolution of the Sierra Leone conflict.**
- **Consideration should be given to the possible consequences for the peace process of the plan of the Government of Sierra Leone to hold presidential and legislative elections in December 2001.**
- **Consideration should be given to the expansion of the mandate of UNAMSIL to cover the three Mano River Union countries to take into account the interrelations between the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement and implementation of United Nations sanctions on Liberia and the monitoring of the borders between the three countries.**
- **The three heads of State of the Mano River Union countries should continue to be urged to meet without further delay and devise ways to resolve the crisis peacefully.**
- **An international conference for the mobilization of donor support for Guinea should be convened as soon as possible to enable it to cope with the current humanitarian crisis, which is also posing a threat to its sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the country's political stability.**

(b) Conflict prevention and resolution

88. The political turmoil and civil conflicts in several West African countries and the potential for the rapid spread of instability within the subregion underlines the need for the development of a comprehensive approach which would focus, through a range of activities, on addressing the many interlinked root causes of these problems. Concerted international attention, support and assistance, combined with political will and determination by national actors to bring about peaceful change, could do much to turn the situation around.

89. It is the Mission's view that much more could be done to improve capacities within the subregion in the area of conflict prevention and resolution. In this regard, the proposed United Nations office for West Africa, which would improve the United Nations reporting and policy development capacity and enhance collaboration with ECOWAS, would play an important role. In particular, steps should be taken to assess the needs and identify the specific areas of collaboration between the United Nations and the ECOWAS secretariat in the area of early warning. Additionally, the strengthening of the capacity of the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security would do much to enhance the organization's capacity to respond more effectively and provide the assistance necessary to prevent the emergence of further conflict or to bring about peaceful conflict resolution.

Recommendations*

- **The United Nations system and the international community should take steps to strengthen the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.**
- **Cooperation with the United Nations system should be enhanced for the development and implementation of the ECOWAS early**

* In addition to those made during the meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations held in New York in February 2001.

warning system including the central observer office and the zonal bureaux. Support should be given to enable the ECOWAS secretariat to provide logistical and technical electoral assistance to member States.

- **Support should be provided for the development of ECOWAS public outreach capacities.**
- **Greater support should be provided for civil society initiatives in the area of conflict prevention.**
- **To prevent the recurrence of conflict in Guinea-Bissau, where the political and security situation remains volatile, urgent financial and capacity-building assistance by international development partners, including the Bretton Woods institutions, is required. The United Nations (Department of Political Affairs) and UNDP should jointly organize a round-table donor conference to mobilize resources for Guinea-Bissau, as a follow-up to the one organized at Geneva in May 1999.**
- **A more active role should be played by the United Nations United Nations in ameliorating the relationship between Côte d'Ivoire and its neighbours.**

(c) National reconciliation

90. Lack of national reconciliation is a major cause of conditions of political instability and insecurity affecting several West African countries. It is, therefore, one of the priority challenges to be addressed within the framework of a subregional approach to the problems faced by the subregion.

91. In countries experiencing political instability, genuine dialogue between government leaders and opposition groups on a range of political, human rights, rule of law and socio-economic issues is often needed so that progress can be made towards democratization and implementation of good governance practices. Such dialogue will often necessitate compromises, particularly on the government side, so that a deterioration of the situation into civil conflict can be averted.

92. In Togo, for example, for a number of years, several factors, principally the one-party State culture and a lack of confidence between the ruling and opposition parties, have resulted in a lack of will on both sides to engage in meaningful dialogue. This meant that differences on a number of important issues, such as those necessary for the organization of presidential and legislative elections and other steps to improve governance practices, were not resolved. The resulting lack of progress led to several, often violent, crises erupting in the country in recent years. In this regard, mediation by the European Union, the international organization of La Francophonie and other organizations has been instrumental in paving the way for the presidential elections, which were held in June 1998, and the legislative elections scheduled for October 2001.

93. In Côte d'Ivoire , the policy of *ivoirité*, pursued by the Government of President Henri Konan Bedié, since it came into power early in 1994, has been a prime factor contributing to the division of the country along ethnic, religious and geographical lines and the political instability which led to that Government's overthrow by the military in December 1999. The policy, which also prevented the former Prime Minister, Alassane Ouatarra from contesting presidential elections in October 2000, has also strongly contributed to the instability during the transition from military to civilian rule. Pressure from the European Union, bilateral development partners and the international community has since helped pave the way for the national reconciliation efforts currently being undertaken by the Government and the opposition parties. The United Nations has repeatedly urged the Ivorian leadership to engage in genuine national dialogue.

94. In countries emerging from conflict, or where conflict is ongoing, the need for dialogue and national reconciliation is particularly pressing. This is evident in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where such efforts are urgently needed if the necessary conditions for durable peace and stability are to be achieved.

95. Some West African countries have taken steps to resolve internal crises through a process of national reconciliation. The Governments of Mali and the Niger successfully resolved conflicts with Tuareg groups in the northern parts of their countries. The national reconciliation process involved reintegration programmes for former combatants, decentralization of governing structures and greater political inclusivity of representatives of the group so that there is greater

local autonomy. Democratization has also made particular progress in Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, where commendable efforts are being made to promote democratic governance as a foundation for peace and stability.

Recommendations

- **The proposed United Nations office for West Africa, in partnership with other entities of the United Nations system, ECOWAS and other international partners, should make national reconciliation an important part of a comprehensive approach towards the challenges facing the subregion.**
- **The United Nations should be more actively involved in activities aimed at promoting and supporting national reconciliation, as soon as early warning signs of a potential crisis in any West African country are evident.**
- **The United Nations should support and follow up on the efforts of national leaders, in particular those of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, to honour their commitments to reconciliation with opposition groups.**

(d) Peace-building

96. The need to improve capacity for preventive and post-conflict peace-building activities, in a cohesive and multidimensional manner, was frequently stressed to the Mission. To be truly effective, peace-building must be based on a cohesive and coordinated United Nations approach at the country and subregion levels, building on existing infrastructures and instruments. United Nations agencies and departments in the field need to establish appropriate mechanisms to link with the programming and analysis, concerning early warning and prevention measures, which are carried out at Headquarters.

97. Peace-building processes need to begin well before a particular conflict has subsided. Greater collaboration between Governments and their national and international partners, and more flexibility on financial conditionalities from those partners, are needed to address the many problems impeding the maintenance or restoration of peace and sustainable development. The capacity of Governments and subregional institutions needs to be strengthened to enable those bodies to contribute more effectively towards promoting peace and development.

Recommendations

- **Preventive and post-conflict peace-building measures should be among the primary activities of appropriate national and proposed subregional programmes, in particular the common country assessment, United Nations development assistance framework and consolidated appeal processes.**
- **International financial institutions should review their procedures concerning conditionalities related to financing arrangements for countries in transition, or where conflicts are ongoing, taking into account the range of problems such countries face.**
- **Particular emphasis should be placed on the political dimensions of peace-building as a tool for conflict prevention, including in those countries where there is no peace-building support office.**
- **In developing subregional peace-building programmes, there should be close collaboration with Governments, national and international partners and especially subregional institutions. The capacity of Governments and subregional institutions to develop and implement peace-building activities should be strengthened.**
- **In countries where the situation is particularly unstable, the common country assessment and development assistance framework processes should be flexibly adapted, as necessary, to meet the challenges of the situation. Representatives of all relevant United Nations agencies and departments should participate in a joint United Nations analysis and recovery plan.**

(e) Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

98. A number of complaints were voiced over the failure of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes carried out in the subregion because of the inadequacy of the reintegration programmes. As a result of failure to provide sufficient integration assistance, many demobilized former

combatants had rearmed and regrouped into new militias or were resorting to banditry.

99. The view was widely held that many of these militias were supported by some state and non-state actors and are being used to destabilize Governments in some countries and to cause insecure conditions in certain areas in order to facilitate the illegal exploitation of mineral resources and conduct arms and drugs trafficking.

100. In countries where disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are to be implemented, the reintegration aspects should feature as priority areas in joint analysis and recovery plans, common country assessments and development assistance frameworks, and form part of country-level programmes of United Nations agencies. To reinforce the effectiveness of reintegration, economic revitalization should be undertaken simultaneously in the country emerging from conflicts so as to provide prospects of employment and economic growth.

Recommendations

- **Owing to the zonal nature of conflicts in the subregion, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes should be conceived and implemented simultaneously in post-conflict situations in the countries affected by the conflicts and should involve all the parties concerned. Such zonal programmes would be particularly applicable to post-conflict situations in the Mano River Union countries and in the complex situation prevailing in Guinea-Bissau and the Casamance area of Senegal.**
- **Adequate and sustained funding should be provided for job training, job creation, counselling, rehabilitation and resettlement programmes for all ex-combatants.**
- **Support should also be provided to family members accompanying demobilized combatants as well as to the host communities.**
- **Reintegration aspects should feature as priority areas in any joint analysis and recovery plans, common country assessments and development assistance frameworks, and should form part of the country-level programmes of United Nations agencies.**
- **Special attention should be paid to economic revitalization programmes in countries emerging from conflict.**

(f) Stopping the proliferation of arms in the subregion

101. Widespread concern was expressed about the proliferation of small arms and new militia groups throughout the subregion. Existing mechanisms to monitor and to curtail the illegal flow of arms are grossly inadequate. Consideration should be urgently given to strengthening the capacity of ECOWAS, working with its member States, to monitor and curb the illegal flow of arms and the formation of militia groups. This should entail the better integration of mechanisms such as the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development into ECOWAS and the establishment of additional complementary mechanisms.

102. Such mechanisms would need to focus on the supply as well as the recipient side of arms flows into the subregion. Those involved in the illicit arms trade need to be particularly targeted. States Members of the United Nations, in general, and members of the Security Council, in particular, should act individually and collectively to identify and prevent suppliers operating in their own countries from illegally supplying arms to actors in conflict areas. International agreements aimed at preventing illicit arms flows and prohibiting the use of mercenaries should be fully enforced. Sanctions or other appropriate measures should be applied against countries contravening the terms of these agreements.

Recommendations

- **The United Nations system and the international community should develop and adopt policies and activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of ECOWAS to monitor and curb the illegal flow of arms and the formation of militia groups.**
- **The Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development and other mechanisms aimed at stemming the flow of arms should be better integrated with ECOWAS. Adequate financial assistance should be provided to ECOWAS to that effect.**

- **Concerted measures should be taken by the appropriate United Nations organs, including the Security Council, and international and national partners to identify those engaged in the illicit trade of arms to West Africa and to stem their activities.**

- **Member States should ensure compliance with international agreements prohibiting the use of mercenaries. Consideration should be given to the imposition of sanctions against countries contravening such agreements.**

- **A self-enforced code of ethics concerning the activities of legitimate business operations in areas where conflicts are occurring should be developed.**

- **The United Nations should urge all States that are either maintaining or assisting militias to immediately end their support and disband them.**

(g) Ending the use of child soldiers

103. Children make obedient and cheap soldiers capable of instilling terror in civilians and opposing forces alike. Some are forced to fight while others volunteer, motivated by a desire to escape poverty. Adolescent youth in the throes of identity formation are particularly vulnerable to the lures of combat. Those who survive are often physically injured and psychologically scarred, having lost years of schooling and socialization.

104. Tens of thousands of children have, in contravention of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, had a direct role in the fighting in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Tens of thousands more have been displaced, lost one or both parents, or otherwise, been affected by the disruption and insecurity visited upon their young lives.

105. In conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Accra Declaration on War-Affected Children in West Africa and the related Plan of Action, there is an urgent need for ECOWAS and the international community to (a) ensure that those who recruit and arm children or deliberately harm and target them are held accountable and do not profit from such actions; and (b) incorporate child rights and the protection of children in armed conflict into trading programmes for military forces and other security agencies.

Recommendations

- **State and non-state actors using children as combatants should immediately take steps to disband all groups in which child soldiers are operating. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, working in cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and other appropriate United Nations institutions and ECOWAS, should certify that such disbanding has taken place.**

- **The adoption of sanctions against countries using child soldiers should be considered.**

- **All disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes should include education and vocational training and other appropriate assistance for child soldiers.**

- **Mechanisms for reuniting children with their families should be strengthened.**

- **The United Nations, together with ECOWAS, should devise military training manuals and programmes incorporating international human rights and humanitarian law, focused particularly on children's rights.**

- **Governments should ensure that training programmes for military forces and other security agencies include the issue of children's rights.**

- **Technical and financial support should be provided to the ECOWAS secretariat's Child Protection Unit, which is dedicated to the protection of war-affected children, emergency assistance, humanitarian and human rights issues, including early warning capacity and adequate vocational training for children.**

- **The capacity of ECOWAS to monitor the implementation of, and adherence to, international instruments on the rights of the child, and to monitor contraventions of the provisions of those conventions, should be strengthened.**

(h) Child trafficking and child labour

106. Trafficking of children for economic purposes is widely practised in several West African countries. In the underworld of human trade, children are used for purposes such as prostitution, begging and soliciting, construction work, as workers in shops, factories and plantations and as domestic servants. These children are often abused, exposed to hazardous working conditions, confined in the workplace, denied education, basic health care, adequate nutrition, leisure time and the safety and security of their families. Many lose their lives in the process. All lose their basic human rights.

107. In West Africa, millions of young people are affected by this brutal trade. Child trafficking is a complex reality and trafficking networks are generally informal and secretive in nature, making information gathering and the identification of networks and traffickers extremely difficult. In addition, it is often difficult to distinguish between illegitimate and legitimate movements of children across borders.

108. Studies have revealed established trafficking routes, involving private individuals and groups, through Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria and Togo. Some of these countries are suppliers of the children, others are receivers and transit countries, while some are both suppliers and receivers. Only limited data are available on cross-border movement patterns and mechanisms, and even less on trafficking within countries.

Recommendations

- **Governments should be urged to sign and/or ratify all appropriate conventions and relevant optional protocols.**
- **Vigorous advocacy campaigns should be mounted, aimed at high-level decision makers, and support provided for studies to strengthen knowledge about child trafficking.**
- **Governments should be urged to establish institutions to combat child trafficking within the framework of appropriate mechanisms, such as national commissions.**
- **Transit, supplier and recipient countries of trafficked children should be encouraged to reconfirm the outcome of the subregional consultation on child trafficking, held at Libreville in February 2000, and to adopt national plans of action to stem child trafficking both within and across national boundaries.**
- **Strong partnerships should be forged among the key players — non-governmental organizations, Governments, regional and international organizations and the private sector — at the local and international levels. In this regard, it is important to expand such partnerships to the cocoa and chocolate industry through a compact and a code of ethics for child-labour-free products.**
- **In order to prevent traffickers from perpetrating their trade with impunity, the countries of West Africa should adopt legislation with appropriate sanctions to serve as deterrents to traffickers and their collaborators. Key partners in the effort to achieve harmonization of legal provisions could be ECOWAS and the International Organization for Migration.**

(i) Women and armed conflict

109. The effects of armed conflict fall disproportionately on women. The numbers of households headed by women increases significantly during conflict, as many are widowed through war, lose contact with their husbands, or have husbands who are themselves actors in the war arena. Women are often forced into long-term sexual relations and/or forced labour by more powerful men who are in control of their fate, and prostitution is a common feature of conflict situations.

110. In Sierra Leone, since the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in July 1999, although the conflict has generally subsided, civilians have been victims of human rights abuses, women and girls being subjected to systematic rape, particularly by rebel forces. In recent weeks, Sierra Leonean refugees trying to move from Guinea border areas through RUF-held territory on their way to safer areas have been subjected to abuse by RUF forces. Women returnees report many cases of abduction, rape and other forms of sexual abuse.

111. The important role played by women within the subregion in the areas of conflict resolution,

management and reconciliation was acknowledged by the Mission. A number of women's groups are well organized and have established links with groups in other countries with whom they are developing common action plans, in addition to mobilizing civil society to bring pressure to bear on political and military leaders to peacefully resolve conflicts.

Recommendations

- **There should be greater consultation between the United Nations system and women's groups, along with civil society in general, in developing programmes and initiatives. Through such partnerships, direct involvement in conflict resolution and recovery activities of women's groups should be enhanced.**
- **The capacity of women's groups, which is often limited by lack of expertise and resources, should be enhanced so that they can play the fullest possible role in initiatives aimed at promoting peace, security, respect for human rights, and development. This capacity-building dimension should be integrated into all United Nations peace-building and development activities in the subregion.**

(j) Peacekeeping

112. Several interlocutors were critical of a number of United Nations peacekeeping policies, in particular, its approach to peacekeeping initiatives within the subregion. This criticism included perceived inadequacies of mandates, delayed response to emergencies and inadequate support to African contingents operating in peacekeeping efforts in the subregion. Many felt that the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone should be strengthened or changed to peace enforcement.

113. Troop-contributing countries provide contingents to United Nations peacekeeping operations either under the so-called "wet" or "dry" leasing arrangements. Under the wet leasing arrangement, the troop contributors must fully equip and sustain their troops and they are reimbursed for this, whereas under the dry leasing arrangement varying degrees of support are provided by the United Nations. Many West African troop contributors have opted for a wet leasing arrangement when a dry leasing arrangement would have been more within their means. Due to the strain on already overstretched resources associated with the provision of peacekeepers by Governments, a number of interlocutors stressed the need to review the arrangements for systems of support to peacekeeping contingents so that major equipment and logistical assistance are provided by the United Nations. The experience in Sierra Leone has demonstrated that the wet lease arrangement with the African contingents has not worked. Under instructions from the Secretary-General, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been working to address this problem together with troop-contributing countries. Several interlocutors also complained that the procedure for obtaining reimbursements from the United Nations is unduly cumbersome and that there are inordinate delays in receiving payments.

Recommendations

- **The United Nations and the international community should do more to assist West African countries that are willing to provide peacekeeping troops but find that meeting United Nations requirements regarding equipment and sustainment are unduly burdensome.**
- **Representatives of potential troop-contributing countries should be adequately informed about United Nations rules and regulations governing the wet and dry leasing policies. The dry lease option, which is more commensurate to the means of West African countries, should be systematically proposed.**
- **The United Nations should strengthen the capacity of ECOWAS to implement its programmes and plans in the area of peacekeeping, including through the strengthening of ECOWAS headquarters arrangements, training centres and the provision of logistical and technical support, when required.**

(k) Implementing targeted sanctions

114. The recent adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1343 (2001), regarding Liberia, was discussed with interlocutors in the context of the current crisis in the Mano River Union countries. The belief was generally expressed that, despite the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council on Liberia

since 1992, arms were widely circulating inside the country. Regarding the sanctions on Liberia adopted by the Security Council in resolution 1343 (2001), several interlocutors were of the view that the threat of such sanctions might be more effective than their actual imposition. Concerns were voiced by Liberian civil society representatives that the Liberian people and not just the Government might be adversely affected by the proposed sanctions. They felt that steps should be taken to ensure that the effect of the sanctions on the population as a whole was minimized, including on diamond miners working in Liberia. In this regard, they stressed that the sanctions being proposed should be well targeted to ensure that they do not worsen the already difficult humanitarian and socio-economic situation in Liberia.

115. It was widely felt that, in dealing with Liberia, close cooperation would be needed between the Security Council and ECOWAS, and that it was necessary to adopt a two-track approach, involving punitive action and dialogue with the Government of Liberia, in order to achieve the required results.

Recommendations

- **The Security Council should dispatch a monitoring mechanism to Liberia to verify the country's compliance with the terms of the resolution prior to the deadline of 7 May 2001, after which the sanctions could come into effect.**
- **There should be close collaboration between the monitoring mechanism, and other mechanisms established by the United Nations, and the monitoring committee recently established by ECOWAS.**
- **Should the sanctions be imposed, the United Nations should work to ensure that they are effectively implemented, including through cooperation concerning their implementation among the countries of West Africa, both individually and collectively.**
- **Any sanctions imposed should be well targeted to ensure that their impact on the general Liberian population is minimized**

2. Governance and human rights

116. Poor governance and human rights violations are among the main causes of conflict in the region. It is important that local communities and people are empowered in a democratic process to ensure that they have a voice and can be effective participants in the governance of their countries. Dialogue between Governments and opposition parties, as well as dissident groups, needs to be encouraged to promote a genuine process of national reconciliation, including the issue of accountability where gross violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law might have occurred.

117. Judicial systems need to be reinforced, the independence of judges and lawyers promoted and their impartiality protected. This will help ensure respect for the rule of law and protection of the human rights of all, without discrimination. Freedom of association and freedom of the press need to be ensured. Respect for human rights is non-negotiable.

118. It was particularly highlighted in Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria that democratization ran the risk of failing if people did not perceive that they were gaining any "dividends", in particular improvements in the economic and social conditions, from the adoption of democratic principles. An essential tool for conflict prevention and management is the support given to States in transition to allow adequate delivery of social and economic programmes to ensure that social discontent does not jeopardize the democratic process.

119. Human rights concerns cut across the issues of peace, security and development. A human rights dimension should be part of all activities aimed at conflict prevention, management and resolution programmes at the subregional and national levels. Support should be provided to subregional institutions for the promotion of human rights. Support and assistance should be provided in the field of human rights education including a culture of tolerance and raising awareness about human rights through information campaigns and new information technologies. The development of subregional and national plans of action and the establishment of subregional institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights will strengthen national capacities and requires United Nations support.

120. Greater partnership with civil society groups will be essential in developing programmes to promote

participatory democracy, respect for human rights and better governance practices by Governments. In this regard, the United Nations should do more to support relevant activities of subregional civil society groups, including women's, youth and religious organizations.

121. A situation exists of impunity for gross human rights violations and war crimes as well as economic crimes. Justice and truth are essential to national reconciliation and must be sought, especially in countries in transition. Non-governmental entities and the business sector need to be held accountable for illicit activities which often help to prolong conflict.

122. Under the United Nations programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights, OHCHR works with Governments, civil society and national and regional institutions on institutional capacity-building for the promotion and protection of human rights. A technical cooperation project has been designed to strengthen the capacity of ECOWAS to integrate human rights in all activities and assist in organizing and developing a subregional action plan focusing on vulnerable groups and conflict prevention.

123. Religious, ethnic and regional tensions in several West African countries, particularly Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal, are a threat to peace, stability and development in the subregion. West African countries should make use of the preparation for, and follow-up to, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be held at Durban, South Africa from 31 August to 7 September 2001, to stimulate national discussions on these issues and take practical steps to combat ethnic, religious and other kinds of discrimination.

124. Cooperation with the human rights machinery, including the mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and the treaty monitoring system, could provide useful tools for the countries to take stock of problems and devise strategies. For example, visits by Special Rapporteurs on mercenaries, summary executions, religious intolerance and the right to education could be requested by Governments in the subregion. Civil society should be educated on the use of the international procedures for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Recommendations

- **Education programmes on the fundamentals of the democratic process should be further developed and implemented.**
- **Strong support should be given to States in transition for social and economic programmes to help prevent levels of social discontent that would jeopardize the democratic process.**
- **Judicial systems need to be reinforced to help ensure the effective application of the rule of law and justice and prevent human rights abuses.**
- **A human rights dimension should be part of national and subregional programmes of conflict prevention, management and resolution.**
- **Assistance should be provided to subregional institutions for campaigns for the promotion of human rights, including through new information technologies.**
- **Assistance should be provided for the development and implementation of subregional and national plans of action, and subregional institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights should be established.**
- **The role of non-State actors, including the business sector, in zones of conflict in West Africa should be carefully examined. Steps should be taken to hold these entities accountable for any illicit activities which exacerbate conflict.**

3. Provision of humanitarian assistance

(a) Refugees

125. Concern was expressed about the presence of large numbers of refugees close to the border between Guinea and Sierra Leone. As experience has shown in countries in conflict, such as Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal and Sierra Leone, this situation not only poses threats to the security of the host country but also involves the risk that the refugees may be infiltrated or attacked by armed groups. Corrective steps need to be taken, from the outset of any refugee movements into neighbouring countries, so as to ensure

enforcement of international and OAU conventions regarding the settling of refugees far enough from the border for their security. In keeping with those conventions, it is imperative and urgent that the Sierra Leonean refugees, currently in the "parrot's beak" area of Guinea, continue to be moved to safer areas.

126. In transferring the refugees, effective measures should be taken to ensure that militia groups or armed elements do not infiltrate their ranks and to prevent the enlistment of refugees by militias within the camps. To this end, the Government of Guinea should do its utmost to guarantee safe haven to the refugees and the international community should provide the necessary assistance and support.

127. The Mission noted that assistance to Liberian refugees has been significantly reduced in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea. The official reason given for this was that the prevailing conditions in the country were conducive to their return and that Liberia had been at peace for three years. Many refugees have chosen to remain in the host countries, however, since they do not consider that the security conditions in Liberia and the environment are conducive for their return. As the Liberian refugees receive very limited assistance, many are in competition with the host community as they strive to meet basic needs, putting an undue burden on host Governments. This has also aggravated an already fragile situation, sometimes causing security problems. The criteria which have caused this reduction in assistance to these Liberian refugees now appear obsolete and should be reviewed.

128. As already noted, many Governments and civil society interlocutors, including representatives of refugee communities, were highly critical of the inclination of international donors to provide much higher levels of funding for humanitarian emergencies and assistance programmes for refugees and internally displaced persons in Europe than in Africa, where large gaps between needs and funding were invariably found.

Recommendations

- **In conformity with the relevant international and OAU conventions, refugees in the subregion should be settled far enough from borders of host countries to ensure their security.**
- **In this regard, Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees, currently in the "parrot's beak" area of Guinea, should continue to be moved to safer areas. Adequate and timely support will have to be provided to the Government of Guinea and all agencies concerned to ensure the smooth implementation of this process.**
- **Effective measures should be taken to ensure that militia groups or armed elements do not infiltrate the ranks of refugees being transferred to safer areas and that refugees are not enlisted by militias within camps.**
- **The Government of Sierra Leone should ensure that adequate preparations are made for the reception of refugees opting for voluntary repatriation including through the identification of safe repatriation zones within Sierra Leone, in close cooperation with UNHCR and UNAMSIL, and other international and national partners.**
- **Assistance needs to be targeted to both refugee and host communities.**
- **The Government of Guinea should do its utmost to guarantee safe haven to the refugees, with the international community providing necessary assistance and support.**
- **The criteria which have caused the reduction in assistance to the Liberian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea should be reviewed. In the meantime, assistance should be provided immediately in those cases where the conditions for safe and voluntary return of these refugees to their communities of origin are not met.**
- **International donors should particularly review their practices for funding humanitarian programmes for refugees and internally displaced persons to ensure that there is consistency in covering requirements and needs wherever they occur worldwide and that disparities are eliminated.**

(b) Ensuring safe access and safe passage

129. In view of the security situation along the borders between Guinea and Liberia, the Mission noted that the targeted emergency response of humanitarian agencies in addressing the security concerns of both refugees and staff is welcomed. The principle of "safe access and safe passage for refugees" must be applied in order

for humanitarian agencies to provide effective assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities. To this effect the commitment of both the host Government and militia groups is essential. It is therefore recommended that agreement be reached at the subregional level, which would guarantee the application of this principle. The principle of adequate protection and "safe passage" also applies to all humanitarian workers.

Recommendations

- **All fighting forces should commit themselves to ensure safe access and safe passage to refugees, internally displaced persons and humanitarian agencies.**
- **Agreement should be reached at the subregional level, which would guarantee the application of this principle.**

(c) Internally displaced persons and host communities

130. In addition to the meagre resources devoted to African refugees and internally displaced persons, the severe impact on them is now threatening the traditional offering of hospitality by West African communities. It has also contributed to "asylum fatigue" on the part of host communities and countries.

Recommendations

- **United Nations agencies and concerned Governments should design and implement area-development programmes that would cover basic social services including the health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation needs of returning refugees, internally displaced persons and the host communities.**
- **National capacities will need to be reinforced to better manage and service both internally displaced persons and host communities.**
- **To meet funding requirements for these initiatives, consolidated appeals should explicitly include programmes to meet the needs of both internally displaced persons and host communities.**
- **Effective reintegration and resettlement of internally displaced persons should be treated as an important component of any peace process in accordance with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.**

(d) Security of humanitarian personnel

131. Concern over the security and protection of humanitarian workers operating in the subregion has risen in recent years. Incidents of hostage-taking, killing and the abduction of humanitarian workers in Guinea in the past several months have highlighted this concern. Rebel groups operating in conflict zones generally do not heed the principles of internationally recognized conventions or rules concerning warfare. Often it is difficult for United Nations agencies to operate as the Organization is seen as being "on the side" of the Government or that of an opposing entity.

Recommendations

- **The safety of all humanitarian workers has to be guaranteed by all parties to conflict so that humanitarian assistance can be provided to people in need.**

(e) Funding

132. The Mission noted with concern the consequences of funding shortfalls on the provision of humanitarian assistance and the security of humanitarian workers. Assistance in such critical sectors as education, income generation, community services and capacity-building and those ensuring basic life-sustaining activities for refugees and internally displaced persons is being reduced or cut. This trend needs to be reversed by raising donor awareness of the long-term negative impacts of funding reductions on peace, stability and security. United Nations agencies have a critical role to play in raising this concern with key donors.

133. The Mission noted that in West Africa, as elsewhere, there is a reluctance on the part of the international community to devote resources to conflict prevention and peace-building measures even though huge costs are involved in dealing with situations after conflicts have erupted.

Recommendations

- **Adequate and timely funding should be provided by donors to support conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance and development programmes.**

- **Funding should be sufficient to meet the security needs of humanitarian workers.**

4. Economic development and regional integration

(a) The poverty environment

134. Poverty is pervasive in the subregion, with about 50 per cent of the population living on less than $1 a day. The ongoing crisis in the Mano River Union countries and political instability in several other countries make prospects for arresting the economic decline uncertain. In addition, approximately 50 per cent of the population in the subregion are less than 15 years old and state investments in education and health care are very low. This high poverty level constitutes an ever-increasing crisis for youth as it is accompanied by high unemployment and diminishing opportunities for the involvement of youth in economic growth and development. This dismal situation provides a breeding ground for the recruitment of youth into militias and their involvement in other illicit activities.

135. Several interlocutors noted the sizeable increase in unemployment and poverty in recent years in urban areas. For example, over the past 10 years, the part of the population living below the poverty line in Abidjan has risen from 1 to 20 per cent. The prospects for an improvement in the situation for the urban poor appears bleak, with the stagnation in job creation in the formal sector and the near saturation in the informal sector. Programmes to assist in accelerating economic growth, coupled with debt reduction measures, would go a long way in reversing these negative trends.

136. Several interlocutors noted the negative effects of corruption on the development of the subregion. Some interlocutors, referring to the debt problem, indicated that some of the loans contracted by previous Governments and for which the citizens and Governments are now being held accountable were not used for the benefit of the countries concerned. It was considered that corrupt governmental officials and others had siphoned off large amounts of money into private ventures and their own bank accounts. Those interlocutors, while condemning corruption in their own countries, also criticized the imposed obligation of paying for debts which had not been used to benefit their countries.

137. Many civil society interlocutors were of the view that many socio-economic problems were compounded by corruption among government officials, past and present, and individuals who abetted them. They were of the view that corruption which was rampant in many Governments in the subregion had contributed to the prevailing conditions of poverty and underdevelopment. They cited, for example, failed privatization programmes which transferred national assets to government officials and those abetting them. They were also very critical of unscrupulous business people who continue to assist some Governments and non-state actors to exploit raw materials in the subregion, the profits from which did not benefit national treasuries. The interlocutors also expressed the view that government expenditures should be allocated to reflect the priority needs of the people. They called for a reduction in military expenditures and an increase in development spending.

(b) Economic integration

138. The Mission is of the view that special attention should be paid to issues concerning subregional integration, in particular those relating to the realignment of subregional institutions working on integration and the harmonization of donor interventions to respond comprehensively to subregional initiatives promoting integration.

139. Regarding the realignment of subregional institutional groupings working on different facets of integration, the Mission noted that most interlocutors saw ECOWAS emerging as the main centre for integration. It was acknowledged that the strength and efficiency of ECOWAS institutions and mechanisms, and its ability to respond effectively to all the challenges of integration in a reasonable time frame, depended on commitment to support them.

140. Interlocutors envisaged a central role being played by ECOWAS in subregional integration with complementary roles by UEMOA, BCEAO, CILSS, ANAD, the Mano River Union and other such groupings. The argument conveyed to the Mission and worthy of support is that ECOWAS should be strengthened to emerge as the pre-eminent organization, while at the same time other subregional institutions should be assisted to allow them to evolve into service centres, providing specific support services within an ECOWAS-led integration process. In this regard, for example, it was mentioned that UEMOA and BCEAO, which are more advanced than ECOWAS in issues of financial and economic integration, could

be instrumental in providing service and technical support to ECOWAS. The interlocutors recognized the need to support ECOWAS in those areas that would improve its capacity as a driving force towards integration. Support is needed for capacity-building in the secretariat itself and to revitalize and enhance mechanisms dealing with the broader issues of early warning and conflict prevention, law, judiciary and human rights, common currency and economic issues, including tariff structures and freedom of movement, as well as investments in infrastructure that will broaden economic space and markets.

141. A second matter, linked to the issue of integration, is the harmonization of support and approaches by international actors. In this regard, there was general endorsement of the need to develop holistic and comprehensive approaches to a variety of issues, including conflict prevention and management. For example, several interlocutors felt that any approach to the crisis in the Mano River Union countries should use a holistic and integrated approach, and might require a larger role for subregional organizations. The need for harmonization of support and approaches will require the United Nations system and the international donor community to work together more closely in designing programmes that respond to the needs of the subregion. The institutional arrangements at headquarters and in the subregion should also be geared towards supporting collaborative and comprehensive interventions generally using a subregional or zonal approach.

142. Several interlocutors expressed appreciation for efforts already under way in subregional programming, such as those of USAID, the European Union and several United Nations agencies including the World Bank and ECA. In their view, such efforts would accelerate the integration process if they reinforced mechanisms and initiatives already launched by ECOWAS which are at various stages of implementation, including initiatives in the areas of peace and security, energy and transport, policy harmonization and freedom of circulation of people and goods. Coordinated support to ECOWAS initiatives would enhance the organization's capacity to accelerate integration and, by working through or alongside ECOWAS initiatives, would enhance collaboration among all partners and ECOWAS within a shared framework.

Recommendations

- **Strategic intervention programmes should focus on economic growth and a lessening of the debt burden, as a critical means to create an enabling environment for economic growth and development. Poverty reduction can only occur as a direct result of accelerated and equitable economic growth in a relatively debt-free environment.**
- **Socio-economic intervention programmes must be geared, in particular, towards alleviating the growing youth unemployment crisis.**
- **The international community should consider the strengthening of EOWAS in those areas which better enable it to act as a driving force towards subregional integration.**
- **The international community should support efforts by ECOWAS, UEMOA and other subregional institutions to create a framework for integration in which ECOWAS occupies a central position.**
- **Support should be provided for capacity-building in the ECOWAS secretariat, as well as to revitalize and enhance mechanisms dealing with the broader issues of early warning and conflict prevention, law, judiciary and human rights, common currency and economic issues, including tariff structures and freedom of movement, as well as investments in infrastructures that will broaden economic space and markets.**
- **Institutional arrangements at headquarters and in the subregion should also be geared towards supporting collaborative and comprehensive interventions generally using a subregional or zonal approach.**
- **To enhance the capacity of ECOWAS to accelerate economic integration, development partners should support the organization's mechanisms and activities in the following general areas:**

  Agricultural development and food security

  Industry, science, technology and energy

  Environment and natural resources

  Transport, communications and tourism

Trade, customs and statistics

Education programmes for women and enhancement of their roles in promoting peace and development.

V. Follow-up

143. The Inter-agency Mission recommends that the present report be communicated to ECOWAS, the Organization of African Unity, the World Bank, the European Union and major international bilateral and other multilateral partners and that appropriate arrangements be made to further the discussion with those organizations and partners on the implementation of a subregional comprehensive approach to addressing the multi-faceted problems facing West Africa.

144. Following successful implementation in West Africa, subregional comprehensive approaches should be explored in other parts of Africa, in close cooperation with OAU and relevant African subregional organizations.

Annex

List of participants

The mission was led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahima Fall.

Department of Political Affairs

Godwin Jituboh, Senior Political Affairs Officer

Margaret Vogt, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary-General

Kathryn Jones, Political Affairs Officer

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Department of Peacekeeping Operations

Major General Martin Luther Agwai, Deputy Force Commander, United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

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Nancee Oku Bright, Chief, Africa Section, New York

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Bacre Ndiaye, Director, New York Office

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Solomon Akpata (consultant), Regional Office for West Africa, Niamey

United Nations Development Programme

Anthony Ohemeng-Boamah, Country Programme Adviser, West Africa Division, New York

United Nations Development Group Office

Paul Ares, Associate Director, New York

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Hervé Ludovic de Lys, Executive Assistant to the Regional Director for West and Central Africa, Abidjan

Dillah Doumaye, representative in Dakar*

Abou Moussa, Regional Director for Central and West Africa, Abidjan**

United Nation's Children's Fund

Ndolamb Ngokwey, Deputy Regional Director for West and Central Africa, Abidjan

* Mr. Doumaye participated in meetings in Guinea-Bissau.
** Mr. Abou Moussa participated in meetings at Bamako.

World Food Programme

Felix Bamezon, Deputy Director, Liaison Office, New York

United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament, Lomé

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Economic Community of West African States secretariat, Abuja

Roger Lalcupo, Director, Legal Affairs Division

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Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 1 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the worsening of the security situation which has resulted from an escalation of violence and terrorism perpetrated against Israel by Palestinian terrorists in recent days.

Early this morning, Assaf Hershkovitz, 31 years old and the father of two children, was murdered in an ambush when his vehicle was fired upon and overturned on the road between Ofra and Beit El. Hershkovitz is the son of Arieh Hershkovitz, 55, who died in a similar attack on 29 January 2001 which was referred to in my letter dated 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103).

In the afternoon of 30 April 2001, Esther Sa'adah and her daughter Ayelet, 26, narrowly escaped injury when a bomb planted inside their car exploded in the community of Rafiah Yam.

On Sunday, 29 April 2001, a suicide bomber blew himself up close to a busload of 40 junior high-school students who had left the community of Shavei Shomron. The protective armour of the bus prevented injuries. Minutes before the explosion, the suicide bomber had passed two IDF jeeps but chose instead to target the school bus. That same afternoon, several mortar shells were fired at the community of Kfar Darom and two additional explosive devices were discovered in Netanya.

This past Saturday, 28 April 2001, a barrage of Palestinian mortar fire on the community of Nezer Hazani wounded five teenagers at a youth club. Also on Saturday, an Israeli civilian was murdered in a terrorist drive-by shooting near Wadi Ara and a Romanian labourer was stabbed by a Palestinian man as the two travelled in the same taxi.

These recent attacks, in addition to the approximately 20 shooting incidents which occur daily, are merely the latest incidents in the ongoing Palestinian terrorist campaign against Israel. I have detailed earlier attacks in my letters dated 23 April 2001 (A/55/910-S/2001/396), 16 April 2001 (A/55/901-S/2001/364), 28 March 2001 (A/55/863-S/2001/291), 27 March 2001 (A/55/860-S/2001/280), 26 March 2001

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(A/55/858-S/2001/278), 19 March 2001 (A/55/842-S/2001/244), 5 March 2001 (A/55/821-S/2001/193), 2 March 2001 (A/55/819-S/2001/187), 14 February 2001 (A/55/787-S/2001/137), 13 February 2001 (A/55/781-S/2001/132), 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103), 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71), 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114), 20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108) and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065).

This situation is clearly unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue. Regrettably, the Palestinian leadership still refuses to comply with its obligations to prevent terrorist activity against Israel.

Despite the persistent threat of terrorism, Israel has taken substantive measures to ease living conditions of the civilian population in the areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority. To that end, 15,000 work permits have already been issued to Palestinians seeking employment in Israel; roads have been opened throughout the territories; international crossings to Egypt and Jordan have been opened; and controls on the movement of merchandise have been relaxed.

The Government of Israel is fully committed to regional peace and stability and will persevere in its quest to achieve these objectives for the benefit of all the peoples of the Middle East. At the same time, it cannot countenance continuous daily attacks on its citizens and will persist in fighting terrorism — the single greatest threat to peace and stability in the region.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 164, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2001/436

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Interim report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1338 (2001) of 31 January 2001, by which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) until 31 January 2002 and requested the Secretary-General to report to it by 30 April 2001 on the implementation of the mandate, including military and political assessments of the situation on the ground and their implications for the size, structure and deployment of UNTAET. On 5 April 2001, the Council received an oral briefing on recent developments in East Timor. Matters dealt with in that briefing and the questions and answers that followed it are contained in the official records of the Security Council (S/PV.4308) and will be referred to only as necessary for the purposes of the present report.

II. Political transition

2. The main step during the last three months of East Timor's transition to independence was the promulgation, on 16 March 2001, of the regulation on the election of the Constituent Assembly. The civil registration of all residents began on the same day. The regulation will form the basis for the preparation of the electoral roll. As is usually the case, the registration began slowly, but is expected to gather speed as UNTAET's information efforts take effect and technical problems are solved. So far, over 200,000 inhabitants have been registered. The registration must be completed by 20 June if there is to be a sufficient period for review, challenge and appeal of the electoral roll. This is governed by the date of the ballot itself, which is scheduled for 30 August 2001. Clearly, the timetable is tight and allows little room for technical or other delays.

3. On 27 March, the National Council rejected, by a narrow margin, a draft regulation that would have provided for the establishment of commissions to undertake a broad consultation on the future constitution. Following that decision, Xanana Gusmão resigned from the Council. Manuel Carrascalão succeeded him as Speaker on 6 April.

4. In order to encourage public participation in the constitutional development process, and in order to facilitate a broad public consultation, a national civic education framework was developed in close consultation with major civil society groups, which provides for widespread civic education through training of trainers, mass information and multiple civil society initiatives. A first course has been conducted for Timorese who will be based in the districts and will in turn pass on their knowledge to community leaders. They will also facilitate local initiatives to disseminate civic education information throughout the subdistricts. UNTAET also supports initiatives by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to facilitate public participation in the development of the constitution. Finally, district constitutional commissions will be established as an official mechanism to distil the results of these civil society discussions and to enable citizens to express their views in an official forum.

5. There is a broad range of views among East Timorese regarding the structure of the future State, and some who had previously pressed for early independence have recently warned against rushing the process. While the Constituent Assembly has been given a target of 90 days to complete the constitution, the date of independence will become clearer only

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when the Assembly has made some headway in its deliberations.

6. In preparation for the election, UNTAET has launched a comprehensive voter education programme, utilizing printed media, radio and television. At the registration sites, television sets, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), display information about civil registration and the political calendar. The election to the Constituent Assembly is an opportunity for the East Timorese to gain experience in the organization of elections. In addition to training Timorese electoral staff, UNTAET has established an election resource centre to compile documentation about the 2001 elections, the 1999 Popular Consultation and comparative material on electoral systems and administration in other countries.

7. The political parties are slowly beginning to establish district and subdistrict offices, build their membership and prepare for national congresses at which manifestos will be adopted and candidates selected. However, only the East Timor National Liberation Front (FRETILIN) is well advanced in this process. One group, the Popular Committee for the Defence of the Democratic Republic of East Timor (CPD-RDTL) continues to oppose the election, on the grounds that East Timor became independent in 1975 and already has a constitution. CPD-RDTL has attracted some support among the disaffected poor and the urban unemployed and its members have been involved in political disturbances in Dili and Baucau.

III. Economy and infrastructure

8. During the past year, gross domestic product (GDP) grew by an estimated 15 per cent and crop production reached over 70 per cent of the pre-September 1999 level. However, much of the economic growth occurred in Dili, in service sector enterprises and in trade and construction related to donor-funded reconstruction programmes. Unemployment remains substantial, especially in urban areas where the ranks of the unemployed have been swelled by migrants from the rural districts. In order to slow this migration, World Bank programmes are seeking to channel investments to the rural areas.

9. Under programmes administered by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, over $35 million from the Trust Fund for East Timor has been disbursed for projects in agriculture (community irrigation repairs and farm feeder roads), education (classroom rehabilitation and furniture manufacturing), road construction and water supply. A policy of using maximum local labour and inputs has been followed to create employment and build the local economy and capacity, even if, in some cases, it has resulted in slower delivery. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Government of Japan are sponsoring a major school-roofing plan, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is undertaking, in conjunction also with the Government of Japan, the rehabilitation of the power, water and irrigation infrastructure.

10. The future reduction in the number of international personnel based in East Timor will have an inevitable impact on employment, particularly in Dili. Further efforts will be needed over the coming year to ensure that the economic impact of a decrease in the international presence does not engender political instability. In any case, international programmes, for example public works and training, cannot alone create the necessary job opportunities. The development of the private sector is the key to creating sustainable employment opportunities, and the future Government will need to act quickly to establish conditions conducive to attracting long-term investment.

11. For the economic well-being of the Oecussi enclave, a practical and reliable arrangement ensuring unhindered land transit between the enclave and the rest of East Timor is critical. This issue has been the subject of negotiations between UNTAET and the Government of Indonesia, but is so far unresolved.

12. Oil and gas in the Timor Sea are East Timor's main natural resources and the income derived from them will be a major factor in the development of the future State. UNTAET and Australia have conducted two formal and two informal rounds of negotiations over these resources, with a view to reaching an agreement that would come into effect when ratified by the future Government of East Timor. The next round of negotiations is scheduled to take place in Brisbane, Australia, from 2 to 4 May.

IV. Refugees

13. The issue of the refugees in West Timor remains unresolved. After a brief upsurge in March, when 2,735 refugees returned, less than 400 returned in April, despite increased information efforts by UNTAET, culminating in a tour of four camps by its Chief of Staff from 9 to 11 April. The Indonesian regional military commander, other Indonesian officials and representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) accompanied UNTAET's representatives. The visit was well supported by the Indonesian army and police, who provided heavy security. Even so, the team was advised not to visit the camp at Betun, which is a stronghold of pro-Indonesian militias.

14. The United Nations team disseminated information to the refugees about security and the political situation in East Timor as well as about the assistance provided to returnees. Throughout the visit, Indonesian officials told the refugees that the issue of East Timor was settled and the Government's decision on East Timor was final. They also informed the refugees about Indonesian plans for a one-day registration exercise, currently scheduled for 21 May, during which all refugees would be offered a choice between repatriation and permanent resettlement in Indonesia. This plan, which is still evolving, has been the subject of discussions between the Indonesian Government and UNHCR.

15. The majority of the refugees received the information provided with apparent interest, but did not voice any opinion. In contrast, in each camp, a small but vocal group of refugees denounced the result of the 1999 ballot, expressed allegiance to Indonesia and said that they would return only if East Timor became part of Indonesia. In this, they followed closely the line taken by representatives of the pro-integration groups. Disinformation directed at refugees has continued. One particularly glaring example is an article in the *Jakarta Post* of 30 April, which cited a local administration in West Timor as the source for a claim, patently false, that more than 230,000 persons, that is more than one quarter of the population, had left East Timor over the last three months.

16. The United Nations is working with the Indonesian authorities on an appeal for donations to meet the cost of disseminating information in the camps, registering the refugees, repatriation and resettlement. Negotiations continue over the payment of pensions to former Indonesian civil servants. Thus far, Indonesia has agreed to pay pensions only for those who retired prior to the 1999 Popular Consultation; of that group, however, those who live in East Timor would no longer receive their pension after independence. A solution that safeguards the entitlements of those who had not yet reached retirement age in 1999 would no doubt encourage many former civil servants to return to East Timor.

17. Security Phase V was put into effect in West Timor, after the murder of three UNHCR workers on 6 September 2000, and it remains in place. Phase V (evacuation) means that there is no permanent presence of internationally recruited United Nations staff in West Timor. Although the Government of Indonesia has not yet implemented all the measures called for by the Security Council in its resolution 1319 (2000) of 8 September 2000, including the disarmament and disbandment of the militias, the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, after consideration of views expressed by all concerned, has decided to organize and lead an inter-agency security assessment mission to West Timor in May 2001.

Reconciliation and prosecution of serious crimes

18. Reconciliation was an important topic of the visit to West Timor, since it has a direct bearing on the return of refugees. The East Timorese have readily accepted returning refugees who had supported integration with Indonesia back into local communities. At the same time, they feel strongly that, while minor transgressions should be dealt with through reconciliation procedures, major crimes must be prosecuted. In this connection, the Indonesian Parliament's decision to establish an ad hoc tribunal to deal with gross violations of human rights in East Timor was seen as a positive step. However, the relevant decree signed by President Wahid on 24 April limits the jurisdiction of a tribunal to acts committed after the ballot on 30 August 1999. As a consequence, the massacres in Liquica and Suai and several other serious crimes, on which the Indonesian Attorney General has been conducting investigations, would not be prosecuted. This is deeply disappointing, especially since UNTAET had provided evidence and access to witnesses to the Indonesian authorities in the course of

their investigations. UNTAET has not yet received access to evidence and witnesses provided for in the memorandum of understanding with Indonesia on cooperation in legal, judicial and human rights-related fields, concluded on 6 April 2000. UNTAET is pursuing this matter with the Government of Indonesia and is urgently seeking clarification concerning the jurisdiction of the ad hoc tribunals.

V. Security

19. The security situation has been generally good, both on the border and inside the territory. However, on 7 March, a series of violent incidents took place in Baucau, including the burning of the local mosque and attacks on the Timorese District Administrator and other United Nations staff. On 12 March, a fight between two youth groups in Viqueque led to a riot that resulted in two deaths, the burning of almost 40 houses and the displacement of some 600 persons. Additional police and troops were deployed and calm was eventually restored.

20. The violence in Viqueque did not arise over political differences and UNTAET has worked with the leaders of the local communities to strengthen their resolve to maintain order and to oppose violence. The incidents in Baucau, however, in which members of CPD-RDTL and former members of the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor (FALINTIL) were involved, did have clear political overtones, and the fact that a mosque was burned is particularly worrisome. Moreover, pervasive poverty and unemployment create social conditions that make it relatively easy to incite people to violence, notably disaffected youths.

21. There is a widely shared fear among the population that the political process may not remain peaceful. The Timorese therefore look to UNTAET, and in particular to its military component, to prevent and, if necessary, to protect them from political violence. Their immediate concern is focused on the campaign for the election of the Constituent Assembly. However, the periods following the election and during the formation of the first Government of independent East Timor may also require particular vigilance. UNTAET is seeking to address this issue by emphasizing the principle of tolerance for different opinions in its civic education programme and by patrolling areas where there is no permanent police presence. The Police Commissioner and Force Commander have been in close touch in order to refine the procedures for support of the police by the military component.

22. On the border, the situation was generally calm, except for the first days of April, when a young woman was shot and killed by unknown assailants and United Nations troops came under fire. It will be recalled that the relatively stable security environment last year had led to a decision to reduce the military component. However, the onset of the dry season brought with it a significant increase of incursions by pro-Indonesian militias coming from West Timor, who managed to infiltrate the Western and the Central Sector. Two United Nations soldiers were killed during that period. In the light of these developments, the reduction of UNTAET's force level was suspended. At present, UNTAET exercises control over the Western Sector by maintaining a high level of activity by the military component, coupled with very close civil-military cooperation.

23. However, the situation remains unpredictable. The pro-Indonesian militias based in West Timor have continued to advocate armed struggle to bring East Timor into Indonesia and have not laid down their arms. While the current level of militia incursions is low compared to that of six months ago, the involvement of the militias in illegal cross-border trade has increased, providing them with contacts and intelligence. The overall capability of the militias has not diminished and they remain a force to be reckoned with. The Indonesian armed forces have contributed to the relative stability on the border.

24. Given the uncertain outlook on security, it would be prudent to maintain the military component essentially in its present form until the East Timorese Government has established itself. The current strength of the Force is 8,162 all ranks as compared to its authorized strength of 8,950.

VI. United Nations presence after independence

Administration

25. When East Timor attains independence it will not yet have a fully functional civil administration. While advances have been made in training civil servants, many of the skills needed for a fully functioning

administration will take years to acquire. East Timor will therefore continue to need significant assistance to ensure the country's stability.

26. In March, Vieira de Mello, my Special Representative, established a working group on post-UNTAET planning. The group is chaired by the head of the National Planning and Development Agency, a Timorese, and includes three members of the National Council as well as four international staff and the United Nations Development Coordinator. The working group has initiated a complete review of the estimated level and skills of international staffing required to support the future Government. The group has also embarked on a comprehensive schedule of detailed consultations with the Timorese in order to ensure that its recommendations will be acceptable to the future Government.

27. The working group's deliberations and consultations are ongoing, but it is already apparent that there is scope for reductions in the number of international civilian personnel, although there will still be a need for a significant international presence in the post-independence period. This presence should be comprised of international experts who are acting as advisers to East Timorese civil servants and who have demonstrated skills in training and mentoring. In some cases, international staff will be needed to perform line functions that have a high technical content for which expertise is not available locally.

28. These needs are being assessed and evaluated within the framework of the overall allocation of resources. Presently, the transitional Cabinet is considering the resource requirements across all sectors and across a range of sources. The aim is to present a comprehensive picture of the public finances of East Timor and to ensure that the funds from the various sources are effectively used and that investments complement one another. This should also help avoid one pitfall common in development assistance, a concentration on capital investments that can neither be effectively used nor maintained.

29. At United Nations Headquarters, an integrated mission task force has been established to support and complement the working group and to effect coordination among the organizations concerned. The donor conference to be held in Canberra in mid-June will provide an opportunity to review this work prior to the next report to the Security Council at the end of July.

Civilian Police

30. The development and training of the Timor Lorasa'e Police Service is proceeding in accordance with a plan that provides for the achievement of its full strength of 3,000 by the end of April 2003. Until that time, an international civilian police presence will be needed, at a level that will be gradually reduced, to provide assistance for the maintenance of law and order and to train and mentor the Police Service.

Military component

31. Once the new Government has established itself, and subject to the conditions prevailing at that time, it is envisaged that the troops deployed in the east could be gradually withdrawn, while those in the western sector and the Oecussi enclave would be maintained. UNTAET will review this question again after the election of the Constituent Assembly.

32. The first battalion of the East Timor Defence Force (ETDF) is currently undergoing introductory training, which is provided by Portuguese personnel, using equipment provided by Australia. Australia is also building a training facility at Metinaro. The Force will need some considerable time until it is fully operational and can assume its responsibilities. Another conference of countries contributing to the formation of ETDF is to be held in the second half of June in Dili.

VII. Conclusion

33. As this report indicates, East Timor has continued to make progress on the path to independence. Nevertheless, a great deal remains to be done until that objective is reached and more will need to be accomplished thereafter to ensure that the new State can exist on its own. It is inherently difficult to forecast political developments and, in view of the uncertainties that lie ahead, I would favour a prudent approach, which seeks to safeguard the international community's considerable investment in East Timor's future. I am keeping developments under constant review and my report at the end of July will provide a further opportunity for the Security Council to consider this matter.

United Nations S/2001/437

Security Council

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Letter dated 2 May 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 30 April 2001, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

01-36008 (E) 040501

Annex

Letter dated 30 April 2001 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the monthly report on the operations of the Stabilization Force (SFOR). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) George **Robertson**

Enclosure

Monthly report to the Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. Over the reporting period (1-31 March 2001) there were just over 21,700 troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from all the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and from 15 non-NATO countries.

2. Following the general election held in November 2000, the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 12 March 2001 approved the first non-nationalist government since the 1992-1995 war. On 30 March, the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina confirmed Presidents Belkic and Krizanovic as the new Bosniac and Bosnian Croat members of the Joint Presidency.

3. Troops of the Stabilization Force (SFOR) continued to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance operations by means of ground and air patrols. Other operations included area security, monitoring the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, monitoring the Entity Armed Forces, conducting weapons storage site inspections, providing support to the international organizations in theatre, and collecting weapons and ammunition in the framework of Operation Harvest.

4. SFOR continues to assist the local police and the International Police Task Force (IPTF) in providing a safe and secure environment in the Sarajevo suburb of Dobrinja, near the Sarajevo airport, to help the International Arbitrator appointed by the Office of the High Representative to resolve issues related to the location of the inter-entity boundary line. The International Arbitrator has heard closing arguments and is expected to announce his decision in mid-April.

5. On 30 March, an SFOR shuttle bus was hit by a shot from an air rifle on the road from Butmir to Rajlovac, on the outskirts of Sarajevo; there were no casualties. And on 31 March, another shuttle bus was stoned on the Sarajevo airport road, and one soldier was slightly injured.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

6. The situation in theatre remained calm and stable throughout the reporting period, with the entities in substantial compliance with the military provisions of the Peace Agreement.

7. Under the second phase of the establishment of the State Border Service which began in January 2001, there are now 826 members working in the headquarters and in eight offices. On 23 March, a new unit was inaugurated at Brod, on the northern border of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The State Border Service is expected to achieve a membership of 2,700 working in 17 field offices by 2002.

8. Over the reporting period, SFOR troops conducted inspections of 205 weapons storage sites and 3 government ordnance factory sites. On 5 March, SFOR started Operation Hatyer to ensure the security of Bosnian Croat weapons storage sites. On two occasions, Bosnian Croat sites were found to be unguarded, but no discrepancies were reported.

9. SFOR troops monitored 459 training and movement activities: 98 Bosnian Serb; 236 Bosniac; 29 Bosnian Croat; and 94 Federation.

10. During the period under review, demining teams of the Entity Armed Forces were involved in a total of 147 mine-clearing activities.

Cooperation with international organizations

11. Within capabilities and in accordance with its mandate, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in theatre, including the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), the International Police Task Force, the Office of the High Representative, the International Office of the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

12. SFOR continues to support the Office of the High Representative in its efforts to establish common institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

13. The Federation and the Tri-Presidency endorsed the Common Defence Policy Paper, a key element for progress in the restructuring of the Entity Armed Forces, and established several working groups. The master plan for restructuring of the Entity Armed Forces was presented to the entities at the SFOR/OSCE Joint Restructuring Steering Board meeting held in Sarajevo on 13 March.

14. The 15 per cent reduction of the Entity Armed Forces for 2000 has been reported by the forces and is being verified by SFOR. In addition, SFOR continues to support a broad weapons storage site inspection programme to verify the forces' holdings of equipment limited by article IV of the Dayton Peace Agreement (tanks, armoured personnel carriers, artillery, combat helicopters and aircraft).

Outlook

15. Although the overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained relatively calm during the reporting period, there was increased tension as a result of the Bosnian Croats' declared intention to establish a separate entity, the High Representative's subsequent expulsion of the Bosnian Croat Jelavic from the Tri-Presidency and from the Presidency of the HDZ-BK party (Croat Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina), and the subsequent large number of desertions from the VF-H (Federation armed forces). SFOR is monitoring the situation and has taken measures to ensure that there is no effect on the overall security situation.

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Fifty-fifth session
Agenda items 40 and 164
The situation in the Middle East
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Identical letters dated 2 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, upon instructions from his Government, has the honour to present to him the reply of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the two letters addressed to him by the Permanent Representative of Israel dated 16 April 2001 (S/2001/367) and 18 April 2001 (A/55/908-S/2001/385) (see annex).

The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40 and 164, and of the Security Council.

01-35920 (E) 040501 040501

Annex to the identical letters dated 2 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

During the past few days, Israel has pursued its serious acts of aggression against the forces of the Syrian Arab Republic and against Lebanon, as well as its inhumane practice of repression against the Palestinian people. In order to cover for its crimes, which greatly exceed what, in the language of the United Nations, is described as genocide, the Permanent Representative of Israel in his letter dated 16 April 2001 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/367) and in his letter dated 19 April 2001 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/55/908-S/2001/385) deliberately misled international public opinion by distorting the facts, turning the killer and aggressor into a victim and portraying the victim as acting outside international law and in violation of United Nations resolutions.

In view of the importance of explaining the truth and the need to reply to the Israeli allegations, contained in the two letters, which exhibit grave disdain for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions hitherto adopted by various United Nations bodies since the end of the 1940s, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic would like to affirm the following facts:

1. The true reasons for the worsening situation in the Middle East region are essentially attributable to the continuing Israeli policies of occupation, expansion and aggression. In this regard, Israel has persistently defied the will of the international community as embodied in hundreds of resolutions adopted by the Security Council and General Assembly and officially treated it with open contempt. Israel still refuses to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, who are living the bitter experience of repression, poverty and expulsion and whom it is killing without any intentional restriction on its vast military strength and its possession of the most lethal and destructive weapons, which it has no hesitation in deploying in its constant aggression against this defenceless people. Moreover, its aggression against Lebanon and its people did not end with its occupation of the capital, Beirut, and the perpetration of the Qana massacre which claimed as its victims hundreds of children and women who had sought a refuge of safety in the United Nations base there. On the contrary, it continued to the point of driving tens of thousands of Lebanese from their homes and using the scorched-earth policy to set fire repeatedly to their land and homes. The Lebanese National Resistance has forced Israel's humiliating defeat and withdrawal from most Lebanese territories and is still struggling, as in the case of all peoples suffering from foreign occupation, with the aim of liberating the remaining Lebanese territories in accordance with the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations in order to rescue the prisoners abducted from their homes by Israel in flagrant defiance of international legitimacy and international law. What international legitimacy is Israel talking about when it has continued its occupation of most of southern Lebanon for over 23 years and when the Shab'a farmlands are still under occupation and numerous Lebanese remain prisoners in Israeli jails? Furthermore, Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan has hitherto continued since 1967, despite the international community's demand for it to withdraw from these territories in accordance with Security Council

resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In violation of international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Israel continues to force Israeli nationality on the inhabitants of the Golan. The Israeli occupation authorities also bury toxic and radioactive waste in the territories of the occupied Syrian Golan, thus contaminating the soil and water resources and exposing the lives and livelihoods of the village inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan to the risks of constant pollution and destruction of the environment. The number of displaced persons forced by Israel to leave their villages and farms in the Golan now amounts to over half a million individuals, who are still looking forward to the day when the occupation ends and they are able to enjoy the human rights enjoyed by the other peoples of the world. Is there anything in any of these practices to indicate Israel's respect for international legitimacy and the resolutions of the United Nations? Without exception, the entire international community is aware that Israel has become a symbol of contempt for international law and international legitimacy. It is truly ironic to see Israel demanding that others should respect United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy when it is the one which, for half a century, has defied that legitimacy and refused to implement those resolutions.

2. In many of its letters, Israel resorts to propagating its usual lies. What elicits ridicule is that it attempts to predicate these lies on the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as contained in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970. The fact of the matter is that Israeli acts and practices are condemned in every word, line and page of this Declaration. Does this Declaration permit the occupation of others' territory by force, aggression against States Parties, the killing and expulsion of their peoples and the burning of their land, the use of internationally prohibited weapons and the description of the struggle of peoples fighting for the restoration of their rights and land as terrorism? The selective use and distortion of the resolutions and declarations of the United Nations by the representatives of Israel exemplifies nothing but inadmissible excess, a shameful attitude and a perverse interpretation of everything called for by such resolutions. The Declaration contained in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) considers it "essential that all States shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations". Israel also disregarded the provision contained in the same Declaration that "the territory of a State shall not be the object of military occupation resulting from the use of force in contravention of the provisions of the Charter". This Declaration further emphasizes that "no territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force shall be recognized as legal". As for Article 51 of the Charter, it provides that "nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations". What is worth pointing out is that the Palestinian and Lebanese resistances carry out their activities in defence of their occupied territories and in response to the assaults and crimes carried out by Israel.

3. The Syrian Arab Republic has condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and called for the convening of an international conference to define terrorism and distinguish it from the just struggle of peoples for liberation. The Syrian Arab Republic would like to reaffirm its solidarity with the peoples suffering

from the scourge of terrorism and its afflictions. However, on the basis of its belief in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in the United Nations resolutions which accord peoples the right to liberate their land from foreign occupation, it regards foreign occupation and the repression, killing and genocide practised and still being practised by Israel against the Palestinian people, the Lebanese people and Syrian citizens in the occupied Golan as embodying terrorism. Israel has killed scores of leaders of the Palestinian people in numerous countries of the world and its aircraft have shelled innocent civilians in Beirut and the villages of southern Lebanon. Israel has shelled and hijacked civilian aircraft in international airspace and seized boats and ships in international waters. Israel has not hesitated to use terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations, including State terrorism, anywhere in the world. Israel justifies its terrorism, its threat to peace and security in the Middle East region and its killing of innocents on the pretext of its security at a time when the most urgent need, clearly, is for the security of the Arabs in the occupied territories. It is Israel which brought terrorism to the Middle East region and it is Israel which practised it. Israel should know that occupation and the usurpation of rights bring it no security. The names of many leaders of Israel have appeared on the posters of those wanted for trial for having perpetrated terrorist crimes. The killing of thousands in the massacres of Deir Yassin, Qibya, Qana and Sabra and Shatila and of the United Nations envoy, Count Folke Bernadotte, and his assistant in Jerusalem are but a few of the many examples of Israel's terrorist practices. The Arab Summit Conference recently convened in Amman adopted a proposal to seek the trial of these leaders by an international tribunal for war criminals.

4. The Lebanese Government has replied in scores of letters lodged with the Security Council and the General Assembly to the Israeli allegations concerning the relationship between the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. In an attempt to mislead international public opinion, Israel ignores the fact that it was the Syrian Arab Republic which extinguished the flame of the Lebanese civil war that Israel helped to ignite and subsequently feed for over 20 years. Israel is mistaken if it imagines that its lies about the Syrian role in Lebanon will fool anyone who followed and learned of the enormous Syrian sacrifices made to end that war, which Israel hoped would result in the partition of Lebanon and destroy the unity and shared coexistence of the Lebanese people, and even lead to its Balkanization. Israel is fully aware that the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon have a pact of brotherhood and cooperation which governs the relationship between the two countries. Consequently, our country supports Lebanon by providing everything that it needs to defend its territory and achieve its security and stability. Israel takes its efforts to mislead too far in endeavouring to talk about its commitment to international legitimacy and the Blue Line at a time when the United Nations has affirmed that Israel has seriously violated that Line on over 400 occasions during the past few months.

5. The Syrian Arab Republic opened the way to the Middle East peace process in 1990 and made the achievement of peace one of its strategic choices in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. Israel, however, in accordance with a calculated strategy, turned the peace process into a process intended to force the Arabs to capitulate and enable it to obtain through that process what it failed to obtain during the war. The Israeli leaderships, including the head of the present Government, declare on flimsy

pretexts justified only by the desire for expansion and settlement that they will not withdraw from many parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip or from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1976. Israel also continues to occupy the Lebanese Shab'a farmlands and to take Lebanese prisoners, using those same flimsy pretexts as its excuse. The attack recently launched by Israeli aircraft on a Syrian military site in Lebanon is another crime on Israel's record, which is full of acts of aggression, killing and terrorism. The countries of the world have condemned this aggression and hold Israel responsible for its serious consequences. On the basis of its strict understanding of international law, the Syrian Arab Republic has also affirmed that it reserves its legitimate right to defend itself against any aggression. What is the peace which Israel talks about after constantly occupying Arab territories for over 24 years, and how long does it want the Arabs to voice no demand for their land and usurped rights? Is Israel intending to enact a new law on aggression and killing to replace international law, international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations?

6. The facts in the Middle East are plain to see for anyone who wishes to acquaint themselves with them. If Israel thinks that pursuing the fatal course of "keep on lying and you might be believed" will lead to the result which it desires, it is seriously mistaken. Israel must abandon its racist and aggressive policy against the Arabs because there is no future for this policy, which has proved futile. The only available option for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as Israel's full withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and the Shab'a farmlands, and the restoration of the usurped national rights to the Palestinian people. Thus will a just peace be achieved. Such is the proper way to achieve security and dignity for all.

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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Identical letters dated 2 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Corrigendum

Paragraph 6, third to last sentence

For Shab'a farmlands *read* Lebanese Shab'a farmlands.

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Security Council

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4 May 2001
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Identical letters dated 1 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and although Iraq will have nothing to do with Security Council resolution 1284 (1999) owing to its lack of objectivity, it is necessary to establish the facts set forth hereunder in order to correct the distortions that were contained in the fact sheet on missing persons presented to the Security Council at its informal consultations on 20 April 2001, in some of the statements made at that meeting and in the press statement issued by the Council following its consultations.

1. Iraq has from the outset worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), through the Tripartite Commission, in the search for missing Kuwaitis. Iraq stopped attending the meetings of the Commission because of the military aggression committed by the United States and the United Kingdom against it on the night of 16/17 December 1998. These two countries are members of the Commission, and it is claimed that they have a role in the humanitarian issue with which it is concerned. It is for sure that they insist on creating a political role for themselves in the work of the Commission, despite the fact that they actually have no missing personnel among the cases with which the Commission is dealing.

2. The appointment of Mr. Yuli M. Vorontsov as coordinator of the search for missing persons has been a political intrusion into the mechanism devised to pursue inquiries concerning missing persons. It was contrived by the United States and the United Kingdom in deference to the desire of Kuwait to obstruct the work that could have proceeded smoothly on an issue that is of a humanitarian character. The clearest indication of the political and biased role being played by Mr. Vorontsov is in the deliberate distortion of the facts conveyed in his statement to the Council at its consultations on 20 April 2001 when reviewing the questions of the Saudi pilot and the American pilot. This confirms his lack of objectivity and the fact that he is dealing with a humanitarian issue in a political manner.

3. The fact sheet that was submitted to the Security Council presented the issue of the Saudi pilot in a distorted manner and without referring to the relevant facts set forth in document S/2001/340 by Iraq. Mr. Vorontsov added a strange question to this distortion when he said in his statement to the Council that the puzzling fact was that Iraq had handed over to ICRC only 19.6 grams of bone matter. It was as though Mr. Vorontsov had expected the remains of the pilot to be found intact after his aircraft had crashed at extremely high speed with him on board, which was

01-36021 (E) 040501 070501

determined to be the case by the ICRC expert. Mr. Vorontsov's behaviour either indicates his ignorance of facts that are known to everyone who deals with such matters, namely that the recoverable remains of a pilot who goes down with his aircraft can be no more than those found in the case of the Saudi pilot, or it indicates that he knows these facts and that his statement was deliberately made in bad faith. Had he been impartial and objective, Mr. Vorontsov would have perceived the same obvious fact as ICRC, which decided that the matter of the Saudi pilot was closed and that it would not participate in any further efforts in this regard. This is reflected in the record of the consultative meeting of the Tripartite Commission held in Geneva on 15 March 2000.

4. Everyone knows that the United States regarded the American pilot as having been killed in action. For that reason, it did not demand his return, as a prisoner of war, directly after the aggression ceased. Given this state of affairs, it likewise did not submit a dossier of inquiry to the Tripartite Commission, despite the great zeal it displays for the Commission's work. The fact sheet nevertheless states that the pilot's case was raised with Iraq, through the Tripartite Commission, from 1991 through 1993. It is an established fact, on the other hand, that this matter was first raised with Iraq on a bilateral basis on 14 February 1995 by ICRC at the request of the United States, which asked that this be done in total secrecy and refused to reveal the location of the crash site until such time as its experts would arrive in Iraq. For humanitarian reasons, Iraq agreed to receive the United States mission and it communicated that agreement to the Americans on 1 March 1995. The United States delegation arrived in Iraq on 9 December 1995 to implement the joint search operation. Between the date Iraq agreed to the operation and that of the delegation's arrival there were a number of meetings with ICRC representatives in which the views of the Americans on reaching agreement on the technical details for the implementation of the search were transmitted. By its note of 27 March 1995, ICRC transmitted to us the United States action plan. The plan stated, inter alia, that the Government of the United States of America acknowledges Iraq's cooperation in meeting its obligations with respect to prisoners of war and war victims. After the American delegation had arrived, Iraq provided its members with every means of logistic and technical support for the completion of the work. The process took one full week, after which the American delegation returned and prepared a report in which it incorporated a great deal of distortion despite Iraq's full cooperation with it. The Americans also refused to refer to this joint search operation at the meetings of the Tripartite Commission held at that time on the grounds that this matter did not come within its purview. The Americans then raised the matter of the American pilot again four years later, that is to say on 19 May 1999, when they submitted a set of questions through ICRC concerning the fate of the American pilot. The questions were framed in an accusatory manner, and they placed Iraq in the position of being charged with responsibility for holding or concealing the remains of the pilot or for murdering him. Iraq therefore refused to accept delivery of the questions. The case was once again raised by the American side, through a number of official and media channels, a few days before the end of President Clinton's term of office. Iraq's response has constantly been that it has provided all of the information it has on this matter.

5. It is astonishing that the fact sheet conveys what it represents as facts while relying on a distorted quotation by the Reuters news agency of a statement by an Iraqi official spokesman that gives the impression that Iraq has information on the

pilot's case that it has withheld. Those who prepared the fact sheet did not trouble themselves to read the text of the Iraqi statement so that they would know that Iraq had said: "Should the United States authorities persist in propagating their lies on this matter, Iraq will publish the details in their entirety to the world so as to expose these lies and falsehoods".

6. The Americans are now raising the case of the American pilot time and again despite the fact that they know the relevant facts, and they have instigated Mr. Vorontsov to raise the matter in the Security Council. This is no more than a political game that has the purpose of creating pretexts for them to retain their membership in the Tripartite Commission on the grounds that there is a missing person for whom they are searching. They must nevertheless be aware of the fact that the Commission will never deal with the case of the American pilot because they did not submit his dossier prior to 31 July 1996, the date adopted by the Tripartite Commission at its sixteenth meeting, held in Geneva on 12 and 13 June 1996, as the deadline for the acceptance of dossiers. The United States delegation participating in the most recent consultative meeting of the Tripartite Commission, that held in Geneva on 15 March 2001, tried to include the case of the American pilot among those to be discussed by the Commission. The attempt was, however, thwarted when ICRC withheld its approval for the reason indicated above, and this situation was reflected in the record of the meeting in question.

7. After all the distortion, politicization, lack of objectivity and partiality in which the Americans and Mr. Vorontsov have engaged, is it possible for Iraq to trust them and to deal with them in connection with this humanitarian issue, as the Security Council press statement urges?

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Al-Douri**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 3 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and upon instructions from his Government has the honour to convey to him a statement on the recent dangerous Israeli aggression carried out inside the territories of the Syrian Arab Republic (see annex).

The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations would be grateful if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 40, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Michail **Wehbe**

01-36100 (E) 070501 070501

Annex to the letter dated 3 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

3 May 2001

The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General and, on instructions from his Government, has the honour to bring to the attention of the Secretary-General the grievous action perpetrated by Israel inside the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic when, at 2030 hours on 14 April 2001, its military patrols directed their searchlights and fired several rounds at a Syrian police position in the sector of a United Nations position.

The Syrian Arab Republic holds Israel fully responsible for such provocative practices, which represent fresh Israeli aggression against Syria, another escalation of the tense situation in the region and a continuation of its flagrant defiance of all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Syrian Arab Republic demands that these acts of provocation be condemned and that they be ended.

The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations takes this opportunity to convey to the Secretary-General the assurances of his highest consideration.

United Nations S/2001/441

Security Council

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4 May 2001
English
Original: French

Letter dated 4 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and in response to the confusion caused by the letter dated 3 April 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Security Council (S/2001/320), I have the honour to provide the Council with the following clarifications:

1. The Government of Burundi never announced the withdrawal of any or all of its troops from the towns of Pweto and Kalemie, contrary to what is stated in the letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.

2. The Government of Burundi categorically denies the allegations made in that letter to the effect that Burundi has committed an act of aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

3. Burundi is engaged in a peace process and hopes that its neighbour countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, will also live in peace and cooperate among themselves with a view to achieving stability, reconstruction and development in the Great Lakes subregion.

4. To this end, the Government of Burundi intends to pursue the dialogue it has opened with the authorities in Kinshasa with a view to finding solutions to the problem of security along their common border and to facilitating the implementation of the agreements concluded at Lusaka (for the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Arusha (for Burundi), as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions, for the mutual benefit of our two countries.

5. Instead of taking actions which are as pointless as they are anachronistic, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. should have sought to encourage the pursuit of dialogue between his country and ours. Making such utterly groundless assertions and requesting the Security Council to take up an issue which is now a thing of the past appears to be a diversionary tactic at a time when the Congolese and Burundian authorities on security issues have met in Nairobi twice this year, first on 7 February and then, very recently, from 26 to 28 April 2001. Burundi hopes that these talks will be concluded expeditiously, and intends to take advantage of the Security Council's mission to Central Africa from 17 to 27 May to request the United Nations to make a decisive contribution in that regard.

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6. We regret the misunderstanding which the Congolese diplomat's initiative has caused among the members of the Security Council and among certain personalities, including the distinguished Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations, who, in his statement at the public meeting of the Security Council on 3 May 2001 on the report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, gave the impression that he had been deceived by this unfair outburst on the part of our colleague.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Marc **Nteturuye**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2001/442

Security Council

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4 May 2001
English
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Letter dated 4 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement on the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia issued on 3 May 2001 by the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Pierre **Schori**
Permanent Representative of Sweden
to the United Nations

01-36127 (E) 040501 040501

Annex to the letter dated 4 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia issued on 3 May 2001 by the European Union

The European Union strongly condemns the renewed acts of violence by ethnic Albanian extremists in the northern region of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, including the killing of two soldiers, the occupation of several villages and the taking of hostages. The European Union calls upon the extremists to stop the violence, to release the hostages and withdraw immediately.

The European Union emphasizes its continuing strong support for the process of inter-ethnic dialogue that was recently launched by the authorities of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The latest provocations underline the need for the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to continue to show restraint and for leaders of all political parties to support the process of peaceful dialogue, to isolate extremists, to condemn the violence and to urge their supporters to remain calm. The European Union condemns the vicious circle of violence and counter-violence from whatever quarter.

The Union also urges ethnic Albanian leaders in Kosovo and political leaders in Albania to condemn unambiguously these acts of terrorism and to use their influence to prevent the violence, which threatens the stability of the whole region.

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Security Council

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7 May 2001

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Letter dated 5 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward, enclosed herewith, a copy of the resolution on the situation in Kosovo and Metohija and the position of the Serbian people and members of other non-Albanian communities adopted by the National Assembly of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia on 4 May 2001 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dejan **Sahović**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

01-36180 (E) 070501

Annex to the letter dated 5 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to article 127 of the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (*Official Journal of the Republic of Serbia* No. 18/2001),

The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, at the third meeting of its first regular session in 2001, held on 4 May 2001, adopted the following:

Resolution on the situation in Kosovo and Metohija and the position of the Serbian people and members of other non-Albanian communities

The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia expresses its deep concern over the situation in Kosovo and Metohija and the position of the Serbian people and other non-Albanian communities. Two years after the establishment of civil and security presences, the security situation in the province is becoming increasingly serious. The return of expelled persons, as required by the international community in United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), is more uncertain than ever. The life of the remaining Kosovo and Metohija Serbs and of members of other non-Albanian communities is totally uncertain and risky on a daily basis. International representatives are working more for the adoption of regulations on interim self-governance rather than on ensuring safety and security for the population. Terrorism in Kosovo and Metohija has not been prevented but has instead entered an even more radical phase. Organized murders of people and attacks on Government representatives are becoming more frequent. Murders of representatives of moderate political factions among Kosovo Albanians are occurring more and more frequently. During the course of 2001 alone, according to the information available so far, 94 people (61 Albanians, 26 Serbs, 6 Roma and 1 Muslim) have been killed; 363 (210 Albanians, 135 Serbs, 9 Roma and 9 Muslims) have been wounded; 29 persons (25 Albanians and 4 Serbs) have been abducted; and 91 houses (67 belonging to Serbs and 23 belonging to Albanians and 1 to a Roma) have been set on fire.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia demands that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) administration carry out an investigation within a month in order to shed light on the fate of all abducted and missing persons and that, after the expiry of that deadline, it inform the families of the abducted and missing persons as well as the public at large about the results of the investigation, which is both its international and its moral obligation.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia appeals to all international institutions concerned with protection of human rights to intensify their efforts aimed at elucidating the fate of 1,300 abducted and missing Serbs and members of other non-Albanian communities from Kosovo and Metohija.

The establishment of customs points at the administrative boundary of Kosovo and Metohija with central Serbia is giving cause for added concern among citizens. This is yet another act on the part of the UNMIK mission in Kosovo in violation of

resolution 1244 (1999). People are organizing themselves in an attempt to prevent the operation of these illegal customs points. The explanations provided by UNMIK to the representatives of the Serbian Government are contradictory in nature. They are talking about collection of sales taxes and VAT; nevertheless no such practices have been introduced in such a manner anywhere in the world. Even fiscal policies in Kosovo and Metohija should be pursued in consultation with the Yugoslav authorities and carried out by standard methods. However, in doing so, they are exerting an adverse impact on the security situation and imposing double taxation on natural and legal persons. We extend our full support to the resistance of the population to this gross misconduct in breach of Yugoslav customs laws and tax legislation of the Republic of Serbia.

A particular problem is being posed by the elaboration of a "legal framework for provisional self-government for Kosovo". The basic text of the document as prepared by UNMIK does not provide even minimum guarantees for the protection of the rights of Serbs and other non-Albanian communities.

Under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), the international community has assumed full responsibility for safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and for its implementation in its entirety. Therefore, we demand that the United Nations take unconditional specific measures to implement the resolution fully, primarily to ensure the safety and equality of all the population of Kosovo and Metohija as a fundamental precondition for the return of expelled people and for the exercise of their basic human rights.

It is unacceptable to adopt any "legal framework" for the establishment of the so-called autonomy, which is indeed an obligation under paragraph 10 of the resolution, nor is it acceptable to contemplate the holding of any elections in Kosovo and Metohija without fulfilling prior to them all obligations stemming from paragraph 9 of the resolution, and particularly the obligations envisaged in subparagraphs (a) to (d) relating to full demilitarization of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army and other armed groups, as well as regarding the establishment of a safe environment in which displaced persons could return to their homes, in conditions of full public safety and order.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia demands that all authorities, bodies and officials of the international community strictly abide by Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), and in particular that the working group on the elaboration "of the legal framework for provisional self-government for Kosovo" adopt amendments submitted by the Serbian side ensuring the maintenance of a multi-ethnic Kosovo and Metohija within the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, guaranteeing the rights of ethnic communities and the establishment of an interim system of a consensual democracy in which national and ethnic differences have been institutionally safeguarded as well as their rights and special interests.

The National Assembly deems unacceptable human rights violations, the process of overruling one side and attribution of State prerogatives to Kosovo and Metohija.

Belgrade, 4 May 2001

National Assembly of Serbia

President
(*Signed*) Dragan **Marsicanin**

United Nations A/55/929–S/2001/444

General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 40
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 7 May 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letter dated 18 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to you (A/55/908-S/2001/385), I should like to inform you that my Government rejects the fallacies and fabrications contained therein in their entirety and that it would like to state the facts set forth hereunder.

1. The Secretariat confirmed Israel's withdrawal to the Blue Line but did not confirm its withdrawal to the internationally recognized boundary, that is to say withdrawal "from all Lebanese territory" as demanded by the Security Council in its resolution 425 (1978).

2. Lebanon recorded its reservations with respect to the Blue Line in an official manner, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General of 16 June 2000 (S/2000/590). Israel is violating the Blue Line and Lebanon's sovereignty — on land, at sea and in the air — on a daily basis, and it is continuing to hold Lebanese detainees in its prisons without trial in defiance of the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the additional protocols. The mines that Israel left behind it are also bringing death and injury to Lebanese citizens every day and are hampering movement, and Israel is still refusing to hand over most of the minefield maps it has in its possession.

3. Resistance is a right recognized by the United Nations and by its covenants and resolutions, and Israel itself acknowledges that the Shab'a farmlands are territory that it is occupying by force.

4. The Syrian forces stationed in Lebanon are there at the request and with the agreement of the Lebanese Government, and their presence is a necessary, legitimate and temporary one that is not Israel's concern.

5. If Israel actually wants the restoration of peace and security to the region, then it has only to withdraw from the Shab'a farmlands, to release the detainees, to withdraw fully from the occupied Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, including the right to establish

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an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital and the right of the refugees to return to their land and their homes.

Lebanon urges Israel to discharge in full its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and in accordance with the principles of international law and to desist completely from the repeated violations of Lebanon's sovereignty that it commits on land, at sea and in the air. Lebanon alerts the international community to the gravity of these violations, and it calls upon the United Nations to act resolutely to end Israel's occupation of the occupied Arab territories in implementation of the resolutions that constitute international legality.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 40, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Selim **Tadmoury**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2001/445

Security Council

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7 May 2001

Original: English

Letter dated 2 May 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Following the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) at the end of May 2000, the United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peace-building (UNTOP) was established on 1 June 2000, with the Council's support. I appointed my former Special Representative for Tajikistan, Ambassador Ivo Petrov (Bulgaria), to serve as my Representative in the country and as Head of UNTOP.

As provided for by the Office's terms of reference, UNTOP's activities during the past year have focused on the consolidation of peace; political support for efforts to mobilize international resources and assistance for national recovery and reconstruction; promotion of the rule of law and the strengthening of democratic institutions; support for local human rights initiatives; and promotion of coordinated and focused effort by the United Nations system in the country in matters related to peace-building.

Since the establishment of the Office, my Representative has been active in facilitating the process of reconciliation and broadening national consensus in the political environment, which still bears traces of the tragic civil war. UNTOP, together with the United Nations country team, has made a significant contribution to mobilizing international support for targeted programmes aimed at the creation of employment and the retraining of former irregular fighters and their integration into civilian life.

In view of the important and very positive role currently being played by UNTOP, as well as the country's continuing need for support in its post-conflict peace-building efforts, with the concurrence of the Government of Tajikistan, it is my intention to continue the activities of UNTOP for a further period of one year until 1 June 2002.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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